PATENTS FOOD

DB RIDGE'S

## LONDON SOCIETY.

APRIL, 1897.

## " Forbidden."

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# CHAPTER IX.

FALCONER AIRS HIS VIEWS.

SEVERAL people came to dinner that night, and the master of the house exerted himself to be unusually agreeable. The difference of opinion which was always growing more deeply marked between the husband and wife was apparent in the arrangements. The waiting was rather slow, for half the footmen were absent. Beatrice in the early days of their married life had effected a compromise for the satisfaction of her conscience. If Lord Falconer insisted on having a Sunday dinner party, she also insisted that the men who wished to go to church should be permitted to do so. Some allowances were to be made for a Bishop's daughter, he reflected, so he gave in, at least for a time, and only swore under his breath when anything went wrong.

Beatrice puzzled her husband completely that night. They had not met except in public, as he had come in late, only just in time to dress, when she had already left her room. She had plenty of smiles for everyone else, but she seemed determined to keep him out in the cold. He was not conscious of having done any wrong. It was not his fault if Sartoris was out, and it seemed to him the most natural thing in the world to take "the poor little woman" for a drive before he dropped her at her sister's in Jermyn Street. Besides, Beatrice knew nothing about it. They were great friends, he and Nina, and he was not going to give her up for anybody. He put down his glass with a thump, as he made this resolution, and

Lady Crosby, who was sitting next him, looked up in surprise. "Did you want to break it?" she asked with an air of innocence.

"If I did, it's my own," he said, in the half sullen way that was habitual to him. "Every man may do what he likes with what belongs to him."

"A dangerous theory, Lord Falconer! If I were your wife, I shouldn't like it at all."

"When I had once broken you in, we should get along famously," looking straight into her pretty vacuous eyes, with his slow smile.

"Ah, but the breaking in! Digby never managed it, and you wouldn't succeed any better," her golden head put coquettishly on one side, and a provoking smile on her lips.

"If I tried, I bet I should succeed—don't give in to women as a rule."

"I suppose Beatrice twists you round her finger," with a glance towards the other end of the table.

"Look like a man to be twisted, don't I?" with a short laugh.

"Milk and water sort of fellow, with a limp bit of gutta percha for a backbone?"

"Precisely," and then she added with an involuntary little shudder, "Do you know, Lord Falconer, I wonder that anyone had the pluck to marry you."

He took it as a compliment, and his heavy eyes brightened, "I took care to ask one who had plenty of pluck. Bee could face the devil himself without turning a hair."

"I don't doubt it-after you," she added under her breath.

"You and she are great allies I hear; I'm glad of it. Between you and me," dropping his voice, "her own set are frightfully slow. Feel as if I had a weight at the top of my head whenever I come across them."

"It's the most ludicrous thing in the world to think of you with a Bishop in tow," her blue eyes twinkling. She knew precisely what sort of a man he was—only a well-grown animal with fierce passions and no principles, and the gulf between him and his father-in-law seemed as huge as the vast Unknown.

"I cut all that," he said confidentially, "and we get on famously because we never meet."

"Still the Bishop will always be in the background, so you will have to be pretty careful," she went on mischievously, not objecting

to irritate him, as he happened to be somebody else's husband and not her own.

"Hang the Bishop! I shall do exactly as I please," angrily.

"Everybody will be citing you as the model husband," with another provoking smile.

"The pattern will be an original one," grimly.

"I suppose it will, because model husbands have gone out—so the papers tell us," she answered coolly.

"Look here, I depend on you, Lady Crosby, to help Bee to get rid of some of her old-fashioned notions. You go ahead, don't you?"

"I don't know"—hesitating as to whether she ought to be offended or not.

"Oh, yes, you do," he said cheerfully. "Now Bee's the best little woman in the world, but she's a trifle prudish—absurd you know as my wife."

"I quite agree with you," biting her lips to keep in her laughter.

"I want you just to teach her her way about."

"I see—but it will be just like a cartoon in 'Punch'—an angel of innocence in the centre, with frivolity tugging at her with all her might, whilst an ecclesiastical dignitary hangs on to her skirts. Oh, Lord Falconer, why did you marry a Bishop's daughter?"

He looked down at the table, and a tinge of red came into his cheeks. "Because I liked her better than any other man's daughter."

"Yes, but it's very inconvenient," as if the responsibility were almost too much for her.

There was a pause, he looked at his wife again, and felt as if he had been talking high treason. Evidently she was making herself very agreeable to Baron Varicourt, an Austrian Secretary of Legation on her right, as well as to Major Mortimer on her left. She was dressed in a deep shade of gold with a dark red rose nestling in her chiffon, and the colour suited well with the purity of her complexion and the darkness of her hair. She would not throw one glance in his direction but she was very lavish with her smiles on either side, and the Austrian seemed as if he could scarcely detach his eyes from her face.

Why should he wish her altered? Why should he wish her lowered to a level with the women of the fashionable world? Was not she far better as she was? A thousand times, he answered promptly but he could not always be stretching after her on tip toe. He did not want an angel—he wanted a woman—and nothing but a woman—a good woman, of course—one whom he could be sure of under all circumstances; but at the same time she must look with a tolerating eye on all his own irregularities. He was not aware that there was anything impracticable in these wishes, though put into plain English, he wanted a model of virtue to look down with cheerful affection upon an exemplar of vice—and the deluded man actually thought that he might get it!

As the dinner progressed, his irritation increased. Beatrice seemed to be still unaware of his existence, although she was performing her duties as hostess in an admirable manner. On the surface of things there was absolutely nothing to find fault with, and Lady Crosby watched the gathering cloud on his face with puzzled eyes. She could only account for it by supposing that he was jealous of the Austrian; but yet, as he had wished his wife to take a leaf out of her book, this seemed outrageously unreasonable, for flirtation was her natural element. Sir Digby made up his mind to it, and being a philosophic man, bore it with equanimity. But there was nothing in the least philosophic about Lord Falconer, and if he were going to be jealous on every opportunity, then she would never undertake the job of freeing his wife from any remnants of prudery.

The party broke up early, Lady Crosby remarking that she always tried to make up on Sunday for the compulsory late hours of the rest of the week. She was uneasy in her mind as she stood before her cheval-glass critically examining the cut of her dress, which had been made after a perfectly new design. It fitted her small round waist without a crease; and the pale blue velvet folds which formed the top of a low bodice, set off the exquisite fairness of her neck. Diamonds glittered amongst her sunny curls, and on her breast amongst the pale blue folds; and altogether, with her pretty face, her well-shaped head, the beautiful curve of her long, white throat, she made a tolerably perfect picture of physical beauty. She was a very mundane Eve, and therefore fully appreciated by the Adams of her own generation. Wherever she went they sought her out and made much of her; and it was safely predicted concerning her that if there were only one solitary specimen of the male sex at a ball, that man would be found dancing with Sir Digby's wife.

She prized this popularity as other women value their diamonds,

and she would not have exchanged it for a duchess's coronet. Perhaps she prized it all the more because it could never be reckoned on as a dead certainty. It might go at any moment, and once gone, no power on earth could call it back. Therefore she must strain every nerve to keep it up, whilst she seemed to be accepting it carelessly as her acknowledged right. Other women were often a dreadful nuisance to her, but she was wise enough to see that no woman can float safely on the social wave who has none but men on her side. So she cultivated the feminine sex with small acts of good-nature. which gave her little trouble, and brought a sure reward. She knew that some effort must be made to atone for the sin of being usually the best dressed woman at any gathering; and rather than give up her gowns, she was willing to go in for conciliation on all sides. In this she was generally successful, and many highly respectable dowagers, who liked her pretty ways and pleasant manners, said there was no harm whatever in Millicent Crosby, though she was certainly "a little too flighty for their tastes."

"A little too flighty" (a mild term indeed for a woman whom Lord Falconer had called "go ahead"). As she thought over all that he had said and suggested on this point, she told herself that she ought to pull up. His approval absolutely scared her—What was it? she asked herself in trepidation, for Sir Digby would not stay away for ever, and she did not want any ugly stories to be poured into his ear by some jealous cat as soon as he set foot in England. Was it Mortie? Poor old fellow, he had taken to dropping in rather often, but it was so difficult to snub him; a man who won't take a snub with dignity, but flies into a passion and demands a furious explanation, is such a difficult subject for a chilling-off treatment. But she would try, indeed she would. She made this resolution as a salve to her conscience, although she had small hope of being able to carry it out, and went to bed in a virtuous state of mind.

### CHAPTER X.

#### A SPECIMEN OF MODERN OLD AGE.

Beatrice succeeded very well in London society. All her husband's grand relations were only too glad to welcome her as Falconer's most respectable bride. She was a pleasant surprise

to them, for everyone had prophesied that he would marry a barmaid, or the daughter of a bookmaker, or billiard-marker—a person whom they would have to ignore like old age or any other disagreeable fact. That he should choose a Kennard, and that a Kennard should let herself be chosen, seemed as incredible as that the Queen should go to a ballet at the Alhambra; but when they found that it really had happened, a smile of relief and satisfaction went round the circle. Falconer was safely disposed of, and there was some faint hope that he might turn out something better than a disgrace to his family. That he could be a credit to it never entered their heads.

The Marchioness of Malvern lived at 33 Queen Anne's Gate, if not exactly in the odour of sanctity, at least with a strong flavour of respectability about one side of her. She went to church every Sunday and raved about her favourite preachers; she even threw in a missionary meeting now and then amongst her numerous engagements, and gave liberally to the charities which appealed most effectually to her compassion; and down in the Shires, she had a racing-stud under the management of Mr. Pointer, the well-known trainer, in which she took the warmest interest.

She was old, and lean, and withered, but yet she was to be noticed at every ball to which she could get an invitation, in a low dress with the Malvern diamonds sparkling on her parchment skin; and at every fashionable race-meeting she might be seen as well, tablet and pencil in hand, her blue eyes as bright as ever, looking out under the brim of her girlish hat for the horses she had already backed, or the colours she had begun to favour.

A kindly, eccentric old woman, with a broad view of life, unnarrowed by inconvenient prejudices, she was immensely popular—not with those of her own age, but with the younger generation. Young people voted her capital fun; her contemporaries, jealous of her success, and not approving of the way by which she obtained it, said she was "an old fool, and at her age she ought to have known better."

From the first she took a great interest in Falconer's bride, and watched her progress with anxiety. She looked upon her nephew as a dark horse, and she had strong doubts of his staying power on a course of respectability. "Like father, like son," she said grimly, "and what can you expect of my brother's progeny? He was the

worst man I ever knew, and I daresay he has bequeathed his vices as well as his features to his son."

"Let us hope that the Kennard virtues will have a counteracting influence," a Canon's wife said in her soothing voice. She always wished well to everybody, and hoped the best, but her optimistic views had an irritating effect on practical Lady Malvern, especially when she could see no grounds for them.

"Humph! you may hope it if you like, and if you can," she rejoined in a tone of irritation. "But wouldn't you think me a fool if I started across the Channel with a hole in the bottom of my boat, and hoped to get safely to the other side?"

Mrs. Abingdon's smooth face wore an indulgent smile, "I should think you very foolish for starting if you had no hope at all."

"Maria, you are too aggravating," and the old woman laughed. "Whenever I open the front gates for you, you sneak out by the back-door."

"Evasion is the policy of neutrals, and as this is not a family question with me, I am bound to be neutral or nothing," Mrs. Abingdon said complacently, for relationship with Lord Falconer was the last thing she coveted.

"But I thought you knew the bride?" looking sharply into the benignant face, which became perceptibly pinker.

"Yes, of course—a sweet girl—so like her dear father, I always went to St. Peter's if I knew he was going to preach. Such a flow of words—and yet so practical. Did you ever hear him?"

"No I didn't," Lady Malvern said drily, determined not to have the subject turned till she herself chose to change it. "Now that he isn't there any longer to run after, are you going to drop the girl?"

"Drop her? Oh dear no. But you see she has gone completely out of our set, and situated as we are at the Abbey—I don't know quite how to follow it up," rising from her seat and throwing a longing glance at the door.

"Fiddle-de-dee!" exclaimed the Marchioness, who was always rather casual in her language. "Curzon Street is no distance from Dean's Yard, and you needn't take the whole Abbey on your back when you go there. She is in great request for all bazaars," she added cunningly, for she knew that Mrs. Abingdon was plotting a "Sale of work" for "Converts in Caffraria,"—"people are sharp

enough to know that a pretty face brings more money out of young men's pockets, than any amount of charity out of old women's purses."

"So Mr. Pemberton says—but I have a better opinion of human nature," rejoined the Canon's wife cheerfully. "The first thing is to have a good object."

"Not a bit of it," with keen contempt. "The object is nothing. Do you mean to say that the young masher who gives five shillings for a rosebud from a pretty girl, would part with five pence to an old frump with a subscription list?"

"I hope so, indeed I hope so," smilingly.

"Then you've no business to," snappishly. "Nobody does anything from a noble motive now—frank selfishness governs the world."

"Dear Lady Malvern, I won't listen to you, or you will send me away in dreadful spirits. Good-bye, I shall call on your niece next week, if I can find a moment," and Mrs. Abingdon hurried away, eager to consult some responsible member of the Committee as to the advisability of inviting the beautiful Lady Falconer to take a stall at the Westminster sale of work.

Lady Malvern gave a contemptuous sniff. "A fig for her friend-ship—all a matter of self-interest. If Beatrice had red hair and a squint, her dear old friend Mrs. Abingdon would quietly let her drop. I'll go and see how the girl's getting on. She will want me sooner or later if Falconer turns out as I expect."

She drove to Clifford House as soon as the landau came round, but was annoyed to find the room full of visitors.

Beatrice gave her the seat of honour on the sofa, and made much of her, for she was the only one of her husband's relations to whom she felt drawn. The old lady had taken a fancy to her from the first, and determined to do all in her power to make her début as her nephew's wife a success. Her sharp eyes roamed round the room taking stock of all the company. She gave a friendly nod to Lady Crosby in whom she recognised a kindred spirit. The little Beauty she knew was trying to get as much fun out of life as she could, and that was just what she herself had done long years ago, when her hair was gold instead of silver, and her heart like a well-prepared garden, made for every pretty flower to take root in. But what a very odd crop had grown up! She was thinking it over

placidly as she sipped her tea, and even gave a passing regret to the poorness of the cream, a very odd crop indeed; but, thank goodness, it was quite forgotten now, and if it had done her harm, at least it had done this amount of good as well, for it had endowed her with a vast amount of charity for the peccadilloes of the young and flighty. And they needed charity to save them from the abyss of not deserving it. No one knew this better than the old woman who had done everything-seen everything, and gone everywhere, when her arms were round and not skinny, when her face was like a blush rose instead of a withered leaf, when her heart was throbbing with the strong vitality of youth and not dried up like a walnut of last year's. She had known it all-as she flirted, and danced, and laughed and loved—the wild longings—the crazy hopes—the bewildering successes-the frantic disappointments-she had known how to bear her triumphs without losing her head, and how to hide defeats so that no one should suspect them. And when the time for romance and illusion was gone, when the prosaic period usually sets in, she had taken to baccarat and horse racing, and found in them a a sauce piquante for what seemed at first the tasteless dish of elderly life.

A sudden thought crossed her mind as she chatted with Major Mortimer, who had detached himself from Lady Crosby's side directly he met the glance of the Marchioness's knowing eye. She would ask Beatrice and Falconer down to Ethelred Hall for the November shooting. Then she could keep her eye on them both, and see if there were any hope of his developing into a decent husband. She would give him a chance at all events, and if he chose to throw it away she could not help it. It was her duty to stand by her nephew and his wife, but it is probable that she would have turned her bony back upon her duty if she had not been so delighted with Beatrice, for under no circumstances could she be called a slave to it. If duty came hand in hand with pleasure, then Lady Malvern became very conscientious; but if, on the contrary, duty dropped pleasure and picked up boredom, then she passed on with her nose in the air, and her spectacles in her pocket.

As soon as they were alone, she mooted the project, and had a spasm of amusement when Beatrice thanked her quietly, and added that she would tell her husband, as if it were a matter of doubt whether he would accept or not. Invitations to Ethelred Hall were

canvassed for as eagerly as tickets for the Ladies' Cage on the night of the greatest debate of the season; but the old lady only smiled and said, taking consent for granted, "Bring any man you like, you know; Millie Crosby will bring the Major of course, and Vere Haughton the Baronet."

"But I shall have my husband," the bride remarked with wideopen eyes.

"Of course you will, my dear," rather testily, "but the extra man is to prevent uncomfortableness. If you haven't anyone but Falconer you will have to take somebody else's husband, and some wives don't like it. Don't I remember," knotting up her wrinkled forehead, "a well set up, good-looking young fellow, who seemed to be your tame cat the other day?"

"Hugh Pemberton?" exclaimed Beatrice, as a light broke over her face. "He's like a brother to me—I've known him all my life."

"Then he mayn't be the domestic animal I took him for, but bring him by all means. I don't suppose he will object to look after you, to pick your flowers—or to be your partner at golf or in the ballroom. You couldn't expect Falconer to do these things for his own wife, you know."

"No?" inquiringly.

"And if you don't bring your own man, you will have to take some other woman's property, and then—Heaven preserve us, for there will be storms from morning to night—and I'm getting too old for that sort of thing," she concluded with a wry face, as if the taste of a sour plum were in her mouth. Old age was the only thing she had ever dreaded, and she meant to keep it at bay till she died.

"It was so good of you to come and see me," Beatrice said gratefully, as she watched the bent figure descending the stairs. A younger woman who felt doubtful about the legs would have clutched the bannisters thankfully; but Lady Malvern, lame and unsteady, scorned to touch them. She waited on the landing in front of a conservatory and waved an airy farewell from the tips of her fingers, as she steadied herself for a fresh effort. She thought she was the envied of all beholders with her money, and her influence, and Ethelred Hall as her background; but Beatrice's comment as she looked down upon her with vivid sympathy was, "Poor old thing, I am so sorry for her!"

### CHAPTER XI.

#### AN INVITATION TO ETHELRED HALL.

LORD FALCONER looked well pleased when his wife told him of the invitation to Ethelred Hall.

"That will suit us down to the ground," he said cheerfully. "We could not have stayed in London, you see."

"But we've only just come back from Yorkshire," objected Beatrice, "and we are going to St. Christopher's later on—are we always to be moving about?"

Her husband leaned back in his chair, and as he puffed slowly at his pipe seemed to be lost in cogitation.

"Did she tell you what sort of people would be there? She has three sets, you know—the county deadly-slow, the pi-unctuous and solemn, and the fast—as frisky as you like."

"A mixture would be best—stir them up like a pudding and serve on the same dish. That is what I should do, and then we might have some fun," with her cheerful little laugh, as she held up her hat, and studied it critically.

"I believe you could work it if you chose. The old woman's gone on you to any extent."

"Not to that extent," with a shake of her head. "Besides, her party is made up. The Crosbys—" and she ran over a list, winding up with Hugh Pemberton.

Falconer frowned as he muttered an oath. "What has she asked that infernal prig for?"

"Entirely for your sake," with a mischievous glance at his sullen face.

"For mine? Good Heavens!"

"Yes, to relieve you of some of your responsibilities—to do all the little politenesses that you sometimes forget."

"Humph," discontentedly. "Don't let him get in my way, or I will kick him out of it—that I promise you."

"He is not in the least likely to get in your way," gravely. "You and he would never go in for the same objects."

"An angel in trousers, I suppose?" with a sneer.

"Nothing so anomalous," curtly. "Simply a gentleman in the highest sense of the word."

Falconer was silent for several minutes and let this exalted encomium pass without comment. He was fancying himself at Ethelred Hall, with all his kindred spirits absent, his old aunt spying on his movements and that long-faced dragoon ready to report every slip to the Bishop. Deadly dull he began to think it would be, and at once hankered after his friends at St. John's Wood. If Nina Sartoris were there he could amuse himself with her. She understood him, which was one comfort, and she did not expect too much from him, which was another. She never objected to his mode of expressing himself, or tried to drag him up to a higher level of thought, as Bee would sometimes attempt to do in the midst of her fun.

She was content with him just as he was, so there was nothing harassing about her unless she happened to be in a bad temper; and when squalls came, he could always get into a hansom, and leave her behind to make an earthquake, if she chose, in her husband's studio. As a wife she would have been intolerable, but as a friend to be picked up or dropped just as the whim took him, she was more to his style than most women.

Beatrice was already near the door, with her hat in her hand, when he took his pipe out to make a remark. "Did she say anything about asking the Sartoris's?"

Instantly she drew herself up, and looked an inch taller. Her eyes blazed with indignant surprise, but her tone was icy. "No, she did not."

"She used to do the Lady Patroness to Sartoris—buy his pictures, and that sort of thing. They are in rather low water just now, I fancy. A change would do them good."

Such Christian benevolence Falconer was rarely guilty of towards his friends: for as long as he had his own round of enjoyments, he had not imagination enough to worry himself about other people's. His own pleasure was like a concrete fact placed straight before his eyes, but his neighbour's pleasure might be said to belong to the region of speculation, and he rarely thought it worth while to speculate except on a card or a horse.

"Let them take it then," Beatrice said very quietly, "but not under the same roof with me."

She left the room at once, banging the door behind her. Falconer sprang to his feet in a perfect fury of passion, such as he had never

indulged in since his marriage. He glared at the closed door, as if he had half a mind to follow her, but the other half kept him where he was. A coarse brutal jest occurred to him, and he uttered it, but as there was no one there to hear it, it did no harm – except to himself.

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In the hall he met his wife coming downstairs in her hat and feather boa. He had come out of the smoking-room ready to assert his rights, and to be as offensive as possible on the slightest sign of resentment, but as soon as she caught sight of him, she smiled up into his sullen face, and said cheerfully, "I am going to tea with Lady Crosby, shall I give her your love?"

Beatrice's smile was something to be glad of. It lighted up her whole face, and made her beauty irresistible. Even Falconer's heavy nature responded to her charm, and suddenly losing his ill-temper, he said gruffly, "Give her it all if you like—don't believe you care for it now."

"Falcon!" with a glance that meant a page and a half of tenderest reproach.

He would have kissed her if it had not been for the footmen at the door, but at least he accompanied her to the carriage, an attention he did not often pay her, and gave her a good-humoured nod as she drove off. He walked away, wondering at himself, whilst a pair of girls watching from an opposite window said to each other, "Darby and Joan still? I couldn't have believed it. We gave them a month at the most, and they've taken five. I call it quite old-fashioned."

"Not up to date, at any rate," replied the first with an actual pout -a cynic of eighteen!

### CHAPTER XII.

SOCIETY IN A COUNTRY HOUSE.

ETHELRED HALL was a sort of "Holiday House" for grown-ups—a solid substantial building of no particular style of architecture, but rather a medley of all-picturesque, because of its irregularity, which broke out now and then into curious gable-ends and quaintly castellated windows. In order to prevent a carping critic from making too much of its defects it was covered with a network of

creepers. The roses and passion-flowers had followed in the train of the evanescent summer, but there were still a few strands of glorified Virginia creeper left to brighten up the sober ivy; and in its age—its quaintness—and general aspect of cheerful hospitality—it seemed an appropriate home for its eccentric mistress.

The Falconers arrived after the first gong had sounded, so there was no time for anything except to dress for dinner as quickly as possible. Beatrice was full of pleasant anticipation—ready to admire or to be admired, willing to amuse or to be amused, a model mood for a guest, whilst her husband was willing to enjoy himself if he had what he deemed a sufficient wherewithal; but he was at the same time on the look-out for being bored. And it is always possible to be bored, even under the most agreeable circumstances, if you only try hard enough.

Lady Malvern gave them both a cordial welcome in her best manner, which she reserved for her own house in the first moments of reception. No one could beat her in the way she received her guests, and made the shyest—if there was such an anomaly—feel quite at home. "Going to shoot?" she asked her nephew in the course of the evening when the best manner had worn off, and before the usual move into the billiard room had come on.

" Hope so. Birds pretty fit?"

"Plenty of them. There was no shooting here, you know, in October—so you have the pick. Are you anything of a shot? I forget," carelessly.

Lord Falconer grinned. "I don't often muff, I bring down my bird, if I have a chance."

"That's all right. I hate people who miss, and abuse the keepers, the dogs, the weather—anything but their own stupidity. Your first shot at matrimony was a good one," and a softened expression came over the worldly-wise face, as she gave an appreciative glance at Beatrice, who in her pure white frock formed an ornamental part of a lively group consisting of Millie Crosby, Major Mortimer, and a few others.

"You talk as if I were likely to make a second," he said, studying the group, and wondering if "the little Crosby" had forgotten his injunctions.

"Mark my words," and Lady Malvern uplifted her fan impressively, "a second would be a mistake."

"Well, you see, there couldn't be a second, so long as Bee's alive, and she's very much alive at present, I can tell you," he added, looking amused.

"She would have to be dead—or you would have to be divorced, there is that alternative, you know," she said as coolly as if she were talking of measles.

"Confoundedly unpleasant both of them," he said with an uneasy laugh. "Why should you talk of such horrors?"

"Which do you prefer?" she persisted, peering up into his disconcerted face.

"Anything rather than the first," hastily, as Beatrice threw him a smile in the midst of the lively chatter, as if to show that she had not forgotten him.

"You would rather she were alive and miserable? Just like the selfishness of man."

"Why miserable?" he asked with excusable irritation. "She has an excellent time—everything she wants—I don't stint her in pin-money, and I let her do exactly as she likes."

"Yes, because for a wonder she likes to do exactly as she ought. Pity you didn't marry Millie Crosby, she is more your style," with a crooked smile, as she slowly fanned herself, with an air of deliberation.

"Thanks! A woman who throws herself at every man she meets, and is never content without a dozen in her wake?" he exclaimed in a burst of virtuous indignation. "I should have punched her head long ago."

Lady Malvern laughed her usual little cackle. "No doubt, but you wouldn't have broken her heart, because she hasn't such a thing. Your wife has."

"I know it," in a low voice.

"Poor child, and you will break it, you know you will—you must. It is as inevitable as winter and all other unpleasant-nesses."

"I know nothing of the sort," angrily. "We are the best friends posssible."

"Wonderful-for six months," sarcastically.

"Six years or twelve. What will you bet me?" he said quietly.

"Anything-Ethelred Hall for instance, or my black pearls—I should feel quite safe. Now go to your smoke and your billiards—

if you want to—I must go and scold somebody else." She moved off with the long train trailing behind her, which she always futilely hoped would hide her lameness.

Falconer looked after her with a shrug of his shoulders. "Would Beatrice ever be like that painted, befrizzled, low-necked scarecrow?" he wondered. "Faugh! What a pity it was that women ever grew old!"

"What are you thinking of?" Major Mortimer remarked en passant.

"Thinking that if I had the ordering of the world, I'd draw the line at old women."

"And take away the last hope of the impecunious youth of the present day. When American heiresses fail, there is nothing else to fall back upon but moneyed old women."

"You haven't tried either of them yourself."

"No—I'm not on sale," shortly, as he leant against the wall looking straight in front of him, and yet seeing a glint of golden hair in the lamp-light, and the turn of a small fair head.

"Perhaps you are in pawn?" suggested Falconer.

The Major made no answer, but he drew his eyebrows together, as he folded his arms. The observation rankled. What had Falconer meant by it? Probably nothing—a random remark sent out as a neat response to his own, without any secret suggestion. And yet it seemed to describe his situation with an uncomfortable distinctness. The more he thought over it, the more irritated he became. It sounded such a mean sort of position for a man who was anything of a man to occupy. And yet—he had drifted into it, and settled himself down in it with pride and pleasure; and it was left to Falconer, of all people in the world, to rouse him to a sense of its unworthiness. Oh the satire of it!

Millie Crosby tripped across the room in her gauzy azure gown looking like a forget-me-not on the wing. "Who is for baccarat?"

"Who plays?" asked the Major, avoiding the glance that she cast on him.

"I do, isn't that enough?" she answered audaciously, trading unwisely on her vaunted popularity.

"Too much," he answered quietly "with everybody looking on; I am for billiards."

Her blue eyes opened so far, that their long lashes were no longer

any good to them. "Very well, Major Mortimer," she said in a low tone of infinite meaning, and she walked away as proud as any pea-hen, who has borrowed her husband's fail.

Frederick Mortimer sauntered off to the billiard-room with a well got-up air of indifference, but his play that night was execrable, and virtue met with its usual reward—a succession of misfortunes. He missed the most palpable canons, the enemy's ball would constantly tremble on the edge of a pocket and yet obstinately refuse to go in, whilst his own seemed to have a special attribute for getting itself tucked under the cushion where he could do nothing with it. Although more than an average player, he lost every game and his temper as well; and finished up in the small hours, out of humour with everybody, and woefully out of pocket.

The next morning at breakfast, Millie Crosby came down looking pleased with herself and with most of the world besides. But she ate and drank, and chaffed, and laughed, apparently in utter ignorance of Major Mortimer's existence. His gravity was so imperturbable and so aggressive, that Beatrice in her inexperience wondered that Lady Crosby took no notice of it. His one idea was haste; there was no pleasant dawdling over another cup of coffee, no dallying with any of the fairer sex. "Come, you fellows, do look sharp. We don't want to start after half the morning's gone," he would say at intervals. His example was infectious. The men pulled themselves together, and became alert and business-like. They ate their breakfasts, as if they had no other object in the world, except to consume as much as they could in a given time: and the women had to talk "sport" and nothing else, if they wished to claim their attention.

Millie had made herself look as much like a man as she could and was only supportable because of her exceedingly feminine face and figure. She had her twenty-bore gun, Norfolk jacket and pot hat, a short leather-bound skirt, and a pair of high Hessian boots.

"Wanted a safe man," she said, peering through her pince-nez, as they all stood in a group under the wide portico.

"Try Falconer," whispered Sir Henry Brown with a knowing look. "Only for Heaven's sake, don't put him out."

"Won't do. I haven't time to insure my life," she said tranquilly. She was wanting Major Mortimer to come forward and ask her to stand next to him, in order that she might refuse. But he knew what to expect, and wisely refrained.

"Aren't you coming, Lady Falconer?" Sir Henry asked as they were just moving off.

She was standing rather apart, her large eyes following her husband's tall figure, and did not answer him. Why should people talk of him as if he were a sort of first cousin to the King of Benin?

(To be continued.)

### The Ideal House.

### By JOHN STRANGE WINTER.

IN THE MATTER OF FURNISHING.

I CAME across a volume of poems the other day, the work of a very minor poet. It reminded me of the way in which a great many people furnish their houses. As I turned page after page I was struck by touches of old familiar lines, as if the author had thoroughly saturated himself with certain famous poems and distinct styles, and had then set out to give an example of each, off his own bat, as it were. The opening poem started off with Tennyson's "Sea Dreams," then slipped in less than three pages into Longfellow's "Driftwood," and Lewis Carroll's "Walrus and the Carpenter," without the humour, meandered after that into Wordsworth's "We are Seven," and ended at last in a reflection of "The Ancient Mariner." And so on all through the volume. Now one came across the tender ring of "Enoch Arden," then stumbled over a wholly incomprehensible echo of the least understandable parts of Browning; now lighted on Macaulay's smooth and easy running lines, then Swinburne's passionate swing and rhythm. In all the volume there was but one short poem which clearly and altogether reflected the author-of that I could make neither head nor tail.

Now this is precisely the way in which some people furnish their houses. They have no ideas of their own. Turn them adrift with so much money to spend in one of the great furnishing emporiums (it is

not a pretty word, but somehow it conveys the idea of a big furniture shop perfectly), and they would sit down aghast and helpless and would end in furnishing a house somewhat as the good man, who insisted on being his own architect, planned out a house and forgot the staircase.

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They would not have the least idea what to buy; they would not, could not, bring themselves to pick and choose, a bit here, a piece there, and to choose so that their selection should form one harmonious whole.

Therefore an Angelina of this type seldom attempts to use her own judgment, but she goes about with her eyes open and she says to her Edwin—"Don't you think Mrs. Smith's drawing-room is sweetly pretty? I should like to have mine like that."

It is not impossible that Angelina's drawing-room is to be found somewhere in West Kensington or Fulham, and that Mrs. Smith's address is De Vere Gardens or Kensington Court; so when the white or yellow drawing-room is reproduced, it is a very long way after the original model, and has usually an unaccustomed look about it which is exceedingly uncomfortable and unfriendly. Any room is both uncomfortable and unfriendly-looking which has no personality clearly expressed. You never saw a room set out in an exhibition in which you felt that you could sit down and make yourself thoroughly at home. So a room which is merely an echo of some other room, never quite strikes the right note, there is always something incongruous and out of drawing about it.

Still, if some Angelina with the terrors of house-furnishing before her, is not blessed with originality of ideas, she must perforce take her ideas from someone who does possess them. If she is wise she will put herself in the hands of one of the lady decorators, will show what she already has—for all Angelinas start married life with a stock of more or less valuable odds and ends for the furnishing of their new nests—and will say how much she wishes to spend. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the result will be good, for the lady decorator is generally an artistic woman who has given up her life to the business of arranging houses. But if Angelina does not wish to do this, there are a few golden rules which she ought never to forget.

The first is to have no fixed rule in arranging her house.

For instance . . . I know a lady who for years made it an

absolute rule to have none but the most luxurious and easy couches, settees and chairs in her drawing-room. It was an enormous room, exquisitely furnished, its mistress one of the most delightful women I have ever known, but I have seen people, with perhaps a touch of rheumatism in their knees, go into her room and look round with a shudder at the low luxurious chairs and lounges, wondering, poor souls, if they sat down how on earth they would ever get up again. I suggested once to this dear woman that she might have a few higher seats for those less lissome than herself—"Oh, but," said she, "that would quite spoil my drawing-room."

At last, however, a very distinguished old gentleman of enormous size went to see her and for him a big chair out of the hall was of necessity brought in, and—the rule once broken through—other and higher chairs crept in one by one and made the room perfection.

Another golden rule for Angelina is never to adopt a fad because it is a fad!

At one time there was quite an eruption in London drawing-rooms of big Japanese umbrellas. Nothing could be more hideous or foolish, but for a little while it was the fashion, and women who would never have thought of utilizing a very pleasant garden shade for any part of the inside of their houses followed the craze in a futile attempt to be fashionable. Of course, the handsomest room in the whole world would be ruined by a huge paper umbrella set up in the middle thereof, looking as if the lady of the house was afraid the ceiling might shed lime-dust upon herself and her friends.

If Angelina begins her married life in a small villa, terrace, house, or flat, boasting of but a couple of sitting-rooms and four or five bedrooms, she should not attempt to try conclusions with a friend with a house four times the size. For instance, a lady who can keep her drawing-room solely for reception purposes, having also a morning-room and boudoir, can afford to furnish it in pure Empire style. But if Angelina has no other room in which to utilize the pretty blue and gold Japanese screen that cousin Mary gave her for a wedding-present, or the pulkhari that Jack's wife sent home from India, or the antimony vases, all long-legged birds and snakes, that Edwin's little sister chose, why then it is but common sense that she cannot place them against an Empire or Louis Seize background without looking ridiculous.

I must confess that personally I loathe rooms of any distinct style

or period. People in the time of Louis Seize and the Empire were all dressed to match their rooms, and for them they were charming enough—people and background made an harmonious whole. But what does an English tailor-made girl or a man in any modern garments look like against the delicate finery of the Louis Seize or Empire periods? They do have, they only can have, the effect of a jarring note in a harmony.

I have a friend who has a Japanese drawing room. It has cost a mint of money, and contains some almost priceless treasures in the way of inlaid cabinets, and lacquer-work. There are no inconsistencies, excepting the great height of the room and a beautiful piece of statuary in one corner, which, by the way, reposes modestly unobtrusive in a niche cornered off with a lattice-work screen, and, if my memory serves; screened again by hanging curtains of reeded beads. The rest of the superb room is severely Japanese—and the effect when one sees from twenty to thirty ladies and gentlemen in the latest fashion of dinner gowns and swallow-tails is painful in the extreme. I always feel, in that room, that modern dinner dress is positively indecent!

If Angelina is wise she will, as far as her drawing-room goes, eschew any particular style. She will take a little of this, a little of that; she will tie herself to no one colour, to no particular shape or form; she will choose all that conduces to cheerfulness and comfort, and she will not be beguiled away from that principle by any pretty fancies she may see in her friend's rooms, no matter how alluring they may be. Decidedly, comfort and cheerfulness are the watchwords for the furnishing Angelina, and these must be combined with a proper sense of proportion and a fair sense of the eternal fitness of things.

If Angelina's home is to be ideal—really and truly ideal—it will always be strictly subservient to Edwin and Angelina. I heard of an Angelina the other day, who, after five years of married life, was blessed with a little Angelina. Within three months of that baby's birth Angelina was heard one day plaintively declaring: "Dear," dear, dear; my beautiful home will be completely ruined if the perambulator comes in and out like this." The wise Angelina will only build her nest so that it is a comfort to herself and Edwin, she will never put together a home so fine that it is an unceasing burden to her.

If Angelina is unable to afford a parquet floor for her hall, or to

lay down an Eastern carpet of many colours, she need not polish her oilcloth with olive oil and beeswax, until every friend she has dreads a broken limb whenever he or she ventures to cross the threshold. A friend of mine died not long ago, and I confess that the very first thought which shot through my mind on hearing the news was: "I wonder if they will go on polishing that oilcloth now."

If Angelina happens to have inherited a good collection of china, she need not set it round in showcases as if she were starting a brica-brac shop.

Angelina should also remember that if she has not much to hang on her walls, she may indulge in brilliantly flowered wall-papers. Neither pictures, nor brackets, or china looks well on a flowery wall, and if such accrued to her when the flowery paper is an accomplished fact, they should only be used when it is possible to set them on some legitimate support, such as a mantelshelf, an overmantel, door mantel, or a frieze or dado rail.

On the other hand, if Angelina has many pictures and pots for the decoration of her walls, she should have as plain and bright a paper as possible. A deep flame-yellow wall, or even a bright rose-coloured one. shows off everything put upon it, and for a dining room there is nothing like a combination of dark oak or Chippendale furniture, with Nankin blue, old Delft or old Spode, against a pale green painted or distempered wall. If there is enough of the blue and a few good engravings or paintings no other colour will be needed, excepting the deep red of the window curtains and the red and blue tones of the Turkey carpet. This is a style which looks well alike in the largest and smallest of rooms. Angelinas who have small rooms might remember that a miniature sideboard and dinner waggon-neither of them more than five feet in length - and six or eight chairs, which will not look out of place in a tiny room, will be most useful later on when she has attained to a dining-room of noble dimensions, and has extended the chairs into twenty-four, and added a sideboard eight feet long to the modest suite with which she began. But a large sideboard in a small room is almost as terrible as a very broad stripe on a very little woman.

In short, to have an ideal home, Angelina must always use discretion, she must ever remember the eternal fitness of things. But how often this simple principle is ignored! I went to an afternoon concert given by a certain very great lady not long ago,

and I don't know that I ever saw such an extraordinary lack of the fitness of things in my life. The double drawing-rooms were papered with flame-yellow, the curtains to the many windows were bright scarlet. The division between the two rooms were draped with velvet curtains and were a red of a wholly different tone. The carpet was a deep soft crimson, the chairs, mostly gilded, were upholstered in broad crimson and white striped satin, or in rich red silk damask which went with nothing near it. There were a few pictures, small oil paintings, hung well below the eye-line, and the only ornaments were blue and gold Sèvres, such things as clocks and candelabra, under glass shades. All the sofa cushions were of a brilliant turquoise blue!

The two footmen who hovered in and out wore bright pink stockings and magenta plush breeches. The hostess—a very florid woman—wore a gown of deep crimson satin (wholly different in tone to all the other reds in the room) quite unrelieved by any softening lace or trimming. One daughter wore a lavender dress, the other two had pretty summer frocks of bright apple green.

Now I did not personally know the lady who lived in this house. I only went to a charity concert as part of an audience; but seriously, if I were to meet her to-morrow, I should avoid an introduction to her. She may be good, worthy, and possessed of many virtues; but of charm, of personal sympathy, of attraction of mind and manner, she has none for me. I could not be friends with a woman whose drawing-room would set my teeth on edge every time that I went into it!

(To be continued.)

### The Blind Man of San Romè.

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### By J. BARRETT-KNOX,

Author of "Robert Trent's Dream," "Havre and its Environs," "Catching a Tartar," "The Body at No. Five," etc., etc.

Padre Antonio stood under the olive trees and looked across the Borga Valley.

The warm wind played with his thread-bare garments and ruffled his thin grey hair, played more and more roughly, until the old man rested his hands upon the stone wall behind him, and leaning backwards, raised his face to heaven.

How the sunlight flooded the world! The beauty of the olives, with their spring glory of powdery green—the shadows of darkening colour upon the western hill—the tinkling music of the water as it flowed over the wooden troughs, and turned the little wheels on its way to the river below—all the peace and harmony of nature, sank into Don Antonio's heart.

"All ye works of the Lord, Praise ye the Lord," he murmured. "God's work so perfect, and man's?——"

What was man's work?

The memory of the sin, the sorrow, and the suffering in the town below, swept like a vision across his sight, and he rose, as if moved to instant action by the thought.

His footsteps made no sound as he passed through the thick green grass, the tall white flowers nodded in the wind and beckoned him to stay and rest, but he left the shade behind, and stepped into the dusty road and dazzling sunlight glare.

"Santa Lucia! Santa Luci—a!" sang a sweet child's voice, as with spasmodic jerks a little blue figure jumped from stone to stone along the highway's boundary wall, descending with a final spring into the pathway. The dancing feet came to a standstill, the slim brown hands shaded the deep blue eyes, while the little blue figure leant over the wall and eagerly scanned the valley. Then she recommenced singing—"Io vorrei che nella luna ci s'andasse in carrettella."

"If you had a little cart, should you really like to drive to the moon, Anita?"

The child turned, "No, Padre mio, for I must go to Biondino's garden to order flowers for the English signor's carriage. It is to be filled with violets for the Carnival. I promised to wait for Beppo, and see! The shadows begin to climb the hill, but he comes not!"

Padre Antonio smiled. It was no news that Beppo was as usual playing truant.

"You will have to go without him Anita, or gain a scolding for being late."

"Tante Lisa will scold in any case, Padre mio, and I promised to wait until the shadow reached the chestnut tree."

The old Priest laid his thin hand upon the faded blue kerchief, which made so soft a frame to the child's lovely face, and said gently: "Always keep your promises, little one, but be careful what promises you make."

Anita smiled, then bounded forward with an exclamation as Beppo came in sight.

Padre Antonio watched the pair until a turn in the path hid them from view, then, with a softly spoken blessing, pursued his homeward way.

"What made you so late, Beppo? Subito! The shadows will have reached the hill top before we get home; even now the moths are at supper; I have watched them for half an hour, darting to and fro as they dipped their long tongues into the flowers."

Beppo did not answer; with a stone in his hand he was creeping towards a sunny spot on the wall, where basked a slender lizard.

Anita clapped her hands, and as the prey vanished, Beppo turned in fury, and hurled the stone with all his strength. "Oibò! take that for your meddling!" Evading the blow, Anita sprang upon the wall and tried to make peace.

"Ecco! Don't be angry. You know I will never, never let you kill anything if I can help it. Why are you so cruel Beppo, when you might be so happy? Just try my way to-day, jump upon the other wall, and hold out your arms, so—now shut your eyes. Don't you feel the wind all over you! A stronger puff will blow us away, run Beppo, run. Avanti! Race the wind with me to the bottom of the hill." Away sped the slender blue figure, the bare feet making no sound, the arms outspread like sails, while the wind,

entering into the spirit of the race, seemed to help her over the road as it blew the faded skirt in fluttering folds, and swept the soft dark hair round her face in a cloud.

Beppo panted behind, and indeed did not overtake his cousin before she had finished her business with Biondino, but this was ever his way. Was there water to be fetched for his mother, Anita could do it, not he. Was the pile of heavy clothes to be carried up from the river, Beppo would not move a finger to help share the burden.

And yet with all the care he took to save himself trouble, nay, perhaps for that very reason, his life was not a happy one. As if by instinct, children shrank from him, and animals fled at his approach. Even Anita's loving influence seemed powerless to check the growing cruelty of his nature.

His mother was a sharp, hard featured woman, with a keen eye to the future. A restricted, narrow future, be it understood, for "Tante Lisa's" world was a small one.

The circle of her horizon did not extend beyond Anita's house, and the fruitful trees that grew and flourished round it. Within that circle she toiled and planned for the accomplishment of her fixed desire.

Some day, the land with its trees, the old house with its vineshaded roof, the river with its water wheels, should all belong to Beppo. The girl was an unwelcome addition to the property, but at present she was easily kept in order. For the future?——

Tante Lisa was busily preparing to meet it, with the fixed determination that nothing should change her plan of action.

The Carnival was over, had been over for twenty-four hours; but no little blue figure haunted the Via Cavour, offering sweet flowers for sale. No dancing feet pattered along the sea-wall, and Padre Antonio was not the only one who had missed Anita at the Carnival, but he was the only one who went in search of the child.

Up the valley he strolled, leaving the town below, through the olives, up still higher, until at last he sat to rest upon the low stone wall above the shrine of the Madonna, as the shades of the evening fell.

Suddenly the silence was broken by the sound of hurried steps, and down the stone pathway came a flying figure. Could it be

Anita! The white face was drawn and haggard, the blue eyes wild and fixed, the blue kerchief gone from the soft hair, the blue frock torn across her shoulders.

Her breath came in tight short gasps, and she ran as one pursued, with hands outstretched in terror.

Stumbling over a knotted root, she fell heavily at the foot of the shrine, and lay motionless.

Padre Antonio climbed the wall, and kneeling, laid one hand gently upon the clenched fingers, but recoiled suddenly, as, with a scream, the child started to her feet, and staggering against the shrine, held both hands up, palms outwards, as if to protect her face. "Off Beppo! off! Don't touch me! There's blood upon your hands!

No! no! Aunt Lisa, not that! not that! I have not killed him!"
And with another wailing cry of agony, she dropped senseless at the Padre's feet.

In silent pity and indignation, the old Priest raised her in his arms, and with difficulty carried her down the mountain path. Often resting for breath, again staggering on, he at last pushed open the door of a little brown house by the stream, and laid his burden down.

In Maria Vecchi's care Anita could be safely left, while Padre Antonio retraced his steps, not pausing in his search until he had found Tante Lisa. What passed between them no one ever knew, but when the old man once more climbed the mountain road, behind him, in a darkened room, lay Beppo, tossing and meaning, and at the garden gate stood the mother, her hands clenched tightly upon the rough woodwork, her whole body trembling, her face a picture of defiance and despair. For Beppo she had lived, for Beppo she could have died, but not even at the Padre Curato's bidding would she forgive Anita, and the torrent of her hatred and wrath, checked and kept in silence by the old man's presence, gathered strength as it rose higher and higher, sweeping all love and pity out of her anguished heart. . . During the weeks that followed, the story of the Carnival was gathered by Maria Vecchi, as it fell in disconnected ravings from Anita's fevered lips.

"If Zucci must go to the butcher, don't let Beppo take her."

"Where is Padre Antonio? He would stop you, Beppo. See, see! Her white coat flecked with blood! Beppo, give me the knife. Holy mother, have pity on thy dumb creatures!"

"Beppo! If you stab but once again you go to the Carnival alone. I will not go! I will not earn one soldo for you. Off! Beppo. Off! Your hands are stained with blood!"

Alas! as Maria Vecchi knew, it was no uncommon thing to see the boys, with open knife in hand, driving a calf across the market place. Were they treated more cruelly than the lambs, which would be brought from Lucca before Easter, their legs tied together, as they lay packed one upon another in the omnibus that generally carried passengers to and fro, over the rough roads. Did they suffer more than the animals that came to San Rome by train at the end of each week, and were shut into the enclosures at the railway station, and there left without food or water from Saturday until Monday, their cries unheeded and unpitied, except by the flower girl of the Via Cavour, who spent many hours on Sundays in carrying water to each successive thirsty crowd.

Until Anita had been convalescent for ten days, Padre Antonio thought it wise to avoid all discussion of the Carnival, but now, the distorted fever vision of Beppo's accident must be faced, or its shadow would lie for ever across the child's future.

"Tell me, Padre mio, is Beppo really blind? I cannot remember clearly, but Tante Lisa said, when she beat me for spoiling Beppo's life, that it was my fault——if it is true, I shall never be happy again."

The old priest could hardly face the depth of misery in the steadfast blue eyes; his own grew dim, but he answered quietly. "If you had spoilt Beppo's life, by accident my child, would you be doing right to let that accident spoil your own life too?"

Nita's attention was roused and diverted from the agony point of Beppo's blindness. She untied her blue kerchief with trembling fingers and turned her face towards the soft wind that was gently tossing the olive boughs. Then she faltered.

"Should I not repent, Padre mio, for what I have done?"

"Yes, Anita, but not for what you have not done. The good God gave you your life to use for Him, you must not dare to spoil it. If you had sinned, Tante Lisa's was a sufficiently heavy punishment, but she was unjust, and I have told her so. The slow tears filled Anita's eyes.

"I did not mean to be unkind," she said.

"You were right, Anita, to try and stop Beppo's cruelty, he

has stopped it for himself now, his accident was caused by the kicking of a mule he was teasing, and he fell under a passing carriage."

"He is sorely punished," murmured the child; "never to see the sun again, but to be always, always in the dark! Oh! Padre mio, what can I do?"

"God will show you, my daughter; go on your daily way as hitherto, and who knows but that your hands will lead Beppo from out of the present darkness into the future light."

All thought of self vanished from Anita's mind, and as Padre Antonio drew the trembling little figure to his side, she exclaimed: "To be in the dark each day as well as night! O let us go to him, Padre mio, he cannot hurt anything now, and I shall be able to take care of him, always."——

"What o'clock is it, mother?"

"Ecco suona l'orologio! Just six, and Anita not yet returned. You manage your business ill, my son."

"There's no management in it. Anita ever was as stubborn as a mule, and age has taught her wisdom. Why she suffers us to remain here puzzles me!"

"Beppo, you madden me! To what end have I toiled and slaved, if not to see you owner of both house and land. Anita may thank me that everything has been as well cared for as if it were my own."

Beppo laughed. "In truth, mother, you have been more like the girl's own relative, instead of merely her mother's friend!"

Tante Lisa changed colour, but spoke sharply.

"When are you going to make her your wife, Beppo?"

"'Tis not for lack of asking, but for all her kindness, she shudders if I do but touch her hand. Once she were mine," he added fiercely. "She should feel its weight effectively."

Tante Lisa looked furtively at her son, half hesitating to rouse his evil passions to the point of action, but conscious that her power over Anita was waning.

Another influence was at work upon the girl's steadfast loving nature, and if once she gave herself up to its sway, another arm would guard her rights, and forth from the Eden of her choice would Tante Lisa have to go.

The sting of such a possibility goaded her past all prudence, and

she spoke: "Anita puts you off that she may beckon others on.

I'll wager she is walking with Pietro Martini now."

A curse fell from Beppo's lips: he rose, stretching himself to his full height and squaring his thickset shoulders, while a look not good to see passed across his face,

"By San Romè, Pietro is a bold man, if he thinks to rob a hungry dog of his bone! I will settle the question this evening, Anita is coming up the path."

Tante Lisa entered the house, and Beppo hastily sat down again, pulling his soft hat down to hide his face.

Tall, upright and fearless, Anita walked through the orange trees. Was it the evening sunlight that made her face so fair? Or was it the joy in her heart, looking through the "windows of her soul."

The soft blue linen robe clung to her supple figure, the faded kerchief framed her face as of old, but there was a steadfastness of purpose in the dark eyes of the girl, which had only been faintly foreshadowed in the laughing eyes of the child.

A string of coral beads was in her hand, and she sang for very joyousness of heart. Catching sight of Beppo, she paused, and a look of pity swept across her face.

Unconsciously she played into the hands of his evil purpose, as she said, "Will you come for a walk with me, along the Bordeghera road, Beppo? Maria Vecchi is too lame to carry her basket of clean linen to the Grande Hôtel, and I have promised to call and tell M. Duclos, that I will bring it myself to-morrow."

Beppo scowled. "Was it with Maria Vecchi that you have been spending this long afternoon, eh?"

"No, after mass I went to the station, and watered the animals, they were so thirsty. But come, let us start, or it will be dark before we get back again."

Anita guiding Beppo by the arm, they quickly climbed through the olives and then descended the hill to the Grande Hôtel. Beppo was silent until they reached the turn of the road, then seating himself upon the low stone wall, he bade Anita deliver her message and return to him. When left alone, he realised that the next few minutes' action would decide the course of his whole future. His grasp tightened upon the stones. Should he carry out his plan, and by stratagem force Anita to consent, and bend her will to his?

What made him hesitate?

A vision of the past, the thought of Anita's face as he last saw it, pleading against his cruelty in the market place.

Anita's voice broke the silence.

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- "Beppo—— I would tell you something." She paused, then recoiled in sudden terror at the blazing passion in his blind face.
  - "Is it of Pietro Martine that you would speak?"
- "Si, Beppo." The soft voice had a sound of tenderness unheard before, and it goaded Beppo to fury.
- "Go!" he muttered hoarsely. "Go! before I do you a mischief. Leave me, leave me alone, I say." Throwing himself along the wall, he hid his face in his trembling hands. Anita steadied herself against the stones, and waited, knowing that to speak would only add fuel to his passion. "Are you still there? No, I will never walk home with you again, never. Your help I must have to get as far as the railway tunnel. Guiseppe works there, and he will bring me back."
- "But, Beppo, you forget that it is Sunday, Guiseppe will not be there."
- "I say he will. Some rocks have fallen, and the line has to be cleared for the express."

Anita hesitated, she had seen that same vindictive look on Beppo's face, when some tortured animal was escaping from his grasp.

- " Beppo---"
- "Oh, say no more, Anita, go to Pietro Martini, he has two eyes and can see your charms, the blind man can find his way alone!" Beppo started to his feet, and staggered down the road.
- "Holy Mother protect us," murmured Anita. "Stop, Beppo, I will lead you. Here, take my arm, but turn back again, don't go to Guiseppe."

In silence Beppo's fingers closed like a vice upon her wrist, and he hurried forward, not speaking, until he reached the railway, and approached the tunnel's mouth.

- "I hear nothing, Beppo; are you sure Guiseppe has not gone?"
- "He works at the far end," muttered Beppo, stumbling heavily forward.

The dim evening light only faintly penetrated the tunnel, and Anita paused.

"Call him, Beppo, he must have a lantern, and I cannot see my way any farther."

Beppo did not reply, but his grasp grew heavier upon her slender wrist, as he sank upon a mound and dragged Anita to her knees beside him.

"Beppo, are you ill? Speak to me!" In the silence that followed, Anita could hear the short, quick breathing of her companion, but no noise of distant workmen, and the horrible truth flashed upon her, that she was alone with Beppo in one of his worst fits of mad passion. "Leave go of my wrist, Beppo." She spoke steadily, despite the violent beating of her heart.

Beppo laughed, and the harsh, grating sound echoed through the tunnel. "When you promise to marry me, Anita, then I will let

you go."

"How can I promise that, Beppo, when I have pledged my word to Pietro? Ecco! be reasonable, come back with me to Tante Lisa. Guiseppe must have finished his work and gone." Again Beppo laughed.

"Guiseppe has never been here——. A lie, you say? Yes, and a thousand lies would not stop me, if by telling them I could bend you to my will. Here you stay with me all night, and then——"

"Yes, Beppo, and then?" The gentle voice made Beppo waver,

but he answered fiercely-

"And then if you do not promise to give up Pietro, by all the saints I swear to lie down on these rails and die."

Anita trembled, but only answered quietly, "And then, Beppo?" With an oath, Beppo replied—

"And then you will have killed me, body and soul! Ah, Anita, have you no pity? Think of all these years of black despairing night, in which you have been my only comfort. I feel your tears on my hands. I cannot let you go."

Darkness was all around them now, but from the entrance of the tunnel, Anita could see the stars. She thought of Padre Antonio, and of his counsel. "Beppo, I dare not marry you; but I shall not be far away, you and Tante Lisa may keep the house——"

"Ten thousand curses on the house," shouted Beppo, "Pietro may have it for all I care, if you will only give him up."

"You forget, Beppo."

"I never forget," he answered fiercely. "Would he were in my grasp, that I might show him the strength of my hatred. Listen, Anita, to me; I will not wait till morning—the evening train is due,

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and, as it passes, here I will lie, and then your words will be too late."

A silence fell between them, only broken by the soft lapping of the waves against the cliff. Beppo's grasp never relaxed, and Anita prayed silently; at last she spoke, "Beppo, how strong you are. Do you know how you are hurting me? I won't move until you let me go, so you need not hold so fast. Thank you, Beppo. Oh! if only you would use your great strength to help, instead of hurt, how wonderful your life would be! Beppo, speak to me. What have I ever done to make you treat me so?"

"If I treat you unkindly, it is but as you serve me. You always were as stubborn as a mule, and now you will not give up your own way, even to save my life."

Again Padre Antonio's words rang in Anita's ears. "Always keep your promises, little one, but be very careful what promises you make." Once more she seemed to feel the soft touch of his thin hand upon her hair, as he blessed her, and she thought, "Padre Antonio would say I was right. God help us!"

Again silence, until the sudden sound of a horn came faintly along the line. Beppo rose to his feet. "For the last time I ask you; will you promise to give up Pietro?"

"I cannot," gasped Anita. There was a moment's pause, and then without a word Beppo released her arm, and flung himself across the rails. "Beppo! Beppo! get up, shrieked Anita, "I did not think you were in earnest, and would dare to die. Oh, God, give me strength! Have mercy upon him!"

Bending over Beppo, she seized his shoulders, and exerted all her force to drag him off the line. There was a sound of tearing as the linen blouse parted beneath her grasp, and she fell backwards upon the up line as the train thundered into the tunnel.

For some minutes Beppo lay still, then raised himself and listened. The roar of the engine subsided, and silence replaced the noise of the vanishing train. A silence so intense that Beppo shuddered.

"Anita? Nita! Answer me! Nita! do you hear? I only meant to frighten you, I knew the train passed up on the other rails."

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Beppo stood upright, and spoke in hoarse, hurried tones. "I won't frighten you any more, Anita. O! take me home again! Where are you?"

But there was no reply, and in a fearful horror of dread, Beppo felt his way across the line, until his foot touched something soft, and then—.

For the last time in Beppo's life there was blood upon his hands. How often had Anita turned from the sight in horror at his cruelty? And now——!

The whole world seemed to him a crimson glare, out of which Anita's pleading face paled and vanished. He tried to speak, to call back the vision, but only a cry of awful despair rang through the tunnel, as Beppo fell senseless upon the ground.

#### L'ENVOI.

Close to the station of San Romè lives a blind man. His old mother sells newspapers in a kiosk at the corner of the Via Nuovo, but she sells them alone, for to her kiosk her son never comes. He sits all day in dumb silence by the window of his small room, as he has sat since the hour when he was roused from months of oblivion by the sound of a passing flock of sheep and goats. Raising his head, he first listened, and then swiftly followed the animals, grasping in one hand his stick, and in the other a shining brass pitcher. That night his mother found him by the station enclosure, and neither persuasions nor threats could induce him ever to return to the yellow house on the hillside.

Pietro Martini lives in it now.

The blind man never speaks, he seems to be always waiting and listening, and so he sits in expectant silence, leaning a little nearer to the casement as each train comes in, and at the first bleat or cry of animal life he rises, and unaided, makes his way, with fodder upon his shoulder, or brazen pitcher in hand, to and fro to the enclosures, where the cry of the "prisoners and captives" still rises up to heaven.

### Running after Shadows.

IN THREE PARTS.

#### By FERREIRA.

### CHAPTER VI. (continued).

THE DETECTIVE GETS THE SACK.

SUDDENLY my thoughts, which had wandered in that strange way they will do, in times of great emergency, when for a brief space no direct action is possible, were brought sharply back to the affairs of the moment, for Jensen made a sudden movement in my arms and I saw that his eyes were open; he was regarding me with a puzzled stare, which, but for the solemnity of the scene, would have been extremely ludicrous. But his faculties seemed to return in a moment.

"Quick," he cried in a voice rendered weak from exhaustion, "quick, they can't have got far; it was just out there in the road where they collared me," and he strove to sit up and indicate the direction, but fell back again with a groan.

"You need not worry yourself," I said quietly, "that happened nearly an hour ago. They will have got clear off by this time."

"Ah, well, we'll catch them yet. Just hold me up and rub my back a bit, will you, they've nearly broken it for me; that plank was so confoundedly hard."

"You may thank your lucky stars," said I, "that it was strong as well as hard, for had it given way, you would have been drowned outright, and poisoned all the fish, eh, Richards?" I made the keeper support him while Giles and I gently rubbed his back, increasing the pressure gradually as the stiffness wore off. Richards watched the process with great commiseration, repeating at every groan, "I should like to have catched they chaps, to treat a poor gentleman so! I should like to have beaten they well."

In a short while Jensen was able to stand, and, though still shaky, declared himself capable of walking home; so with an injunction to Richards to be sure to come and see us in the morning, we took hold of the detective each by an arm and started homewards. The keeper was thus left in possession of the field, and as we turned

away, I heard him mutter, "Lor', how they do be changed, to surely; to surely!" It was evident that the change which the last few years had wrought in Giles and me had taken a greater hold upon his mind than the events of the last hour. To many people, unacquainted with the type of man, this would be a source of wonder, but to me it was quite natural. The Hampshireman at home has a mind as solid as the ground beneath him: he can digest the deepest type of villainy with unrivalled equanimity, provided it affects not his own immediate concerns, but let some slight change occur in something which is engraved upon his mind in a certain shape or form, and then you disturb his entire equilibrium. But this is by the way.

We had some difficulty in getting the detective, in his sorely bruised condition, up the high bank which it was necessary to climb in order to reach the road, but with many groans and the aid of our arms, he managed to surmount the obstacle, and once on the high road he found walking comparatively easy. We had not proceeded far, however, before he pulled up suddenly with an inelegant exclamation.

"There's something been running into my shoulder this long while, gentlemen; I felt it when they first put the sack over me."

"All right," said Giles. "Strike a light, Harry, and we'll have a look."

I did as directed, but we failed to see anything, when just as the match was burning down, I thought I saw the head of a pin in the detective's coat. Hastily striking another match I pointed out my discovery to Giles, but Jensen jumped so when he touched it, that it was evident that whatever the object was, it was buried in something else besides clothes. In another moment, however, it was drawn forth, and proved to be a long, black pin, bent at one end. Giles placed it in the hand of the detective, who no sooner caught sight of it than he let fly another expletive even more forcible than the last.

"This beats all," he cried in tones of the utmost exasperation. "I stuck this pin, or one exactly like it, just within the lintel of the door of that cottage, so that if anyone went in or out when I was not watching, I should be able to tell by its being either bent or torn out, and now they've been and——" but at this point words altogether failed him, and he broke off into disjointed exclamations

and threats of vengeance, while Giles and I sat down at the side of the road and fairly roared. Jensen stared at us with an air of great disgust for a moment, and then as the humour of the situation began to dawn upon him, the corners of his mouth went up, and he laughed till the tears ran down his face. But he stopped suddenly as his shoulder gave a stab of pain.

"It must have gone a confoundedly long way into my flesh," he grumbled, with a return of ill-humour.

"You may think yourself very fortunate that it went in at a slant instead of straight," said Giles as we proceeded on our way, "or you would have been transfixed like Absalom."

"I thought Absalom was hung," returned Jensen. "It's what all villains come to," he added, and he smiled maliciously as he spoke. I really believe that in imagination he saw his aggressors at the wrong end of a rope and himself looking on. And after the treatment to which he had been subjected in the last few hours, even these sanguinary ruminations were almost excusable.

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## CHAPTER VII.

### BEYOND ENDURANCE.

It was on a Friday evening, if I remember right, about three days after the adventure which had so nearly resulted in the death of the unfortunate detective, when I found myself strolling quietly along the road about a mile from Ley. I had been spending the day with some old friends of mine over at Abbots Legh, a neighbouring village, and for a time the events of the last few days had been completely obliterated from my mind. This I have often thought of since and wondered at—it seemed a curious prelude to the storm which was even now breaking over our heads

As I approached Ley and saw the lights twinkling between the trees, I drew out my watch, and quickened my pace on perceiving that it was nearing nine o'clock, for they would be beginning to wonder at the Rectory what had become of me. Even now my mind was still running pleasantly over the events of the last few hours, when I was startled by the sound of a woman's sobs, seemingly close at hand. I hurried on a few paces and then stopped, surprised, and, for the moment, startled at the sight which met my

eyes. I was standing in the deep shadow of the hedgerow, but a few yards ahead of me the bright moonlight streamed across the road through a break in the trees, and fell directly on a gate leading into the fields. Leaning against the gate, and clutching the top rail with her hands was a young girl of about twenty years of age. Her long, dark hair was flowing loosely about her shoulders, and her face which, but for its present expression, would have been remarkably handsome, was turned upward to the sky with such a look upon it I have seldom seen in a human countenance. Broken sentences were issuing from her lips, and the words she uttered left no doubt in my mind as to her unhappy condition.

"Oh, God, close their mouths," she was saying in accents of the keenest despair. "Oh, the baby! the lovely baby! Oh, God, close

their mouths, close their mouths."

I have an innate horror of madness in any form which my utmost efforts are at times unable to subdue; but as I listened to this poor creature, something, either in her beauty and utter abandonment, or the peculiar circumstances of the scene, perhaps both, operated upon me powerfully and I felt a great wave of pity surge up in my heart. It was evident that some dreadful scene was passing across her disordered mind, and in order, if possible, to break the spell I approached her, and laid my hand gently on her arm.

"Can I do anything for you, my poor girl?" I asked kindly.

She gazed in my face for a moment with a startled air, and then with a low cry of fear she turned and ran off down the road. It was useless to follow her, so, after watching her retreating figure for a few moments, I continued on my way considerably depressed in spirits by this strange encounter. The incident, though trivial in itself, dispelled at once the pleasant train of thought in which I had been indulging, and brought my mind back sharply to the labyrinth of doubt and mystery, in which, in common with my friends, I had lately become involved. Even now I did not connect the girl's appearance with the incidents of the last few days, indeed it was not until after all hope of their being of service to us had passed, that the full significance of her words first dawned upon me, but the affair coupled with the strangeness of the circumstances, filled me with a vague and undefined dread, and I hurried on with a nearer approach to "creepiness" on my mind than I had experienced for some years.

This uncomfortable state of nervous tension, though common in children and weakly people, has a peculiarly aggravating influence upon a strong and robust man who is constitutionally fearless. It was not therefore in the best of humours that I entered the Rectory about nine o'clock that evening.

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The lamp in the hall was burning dimly, and the bang with which I hung my hat upon its accustomed peg echoed strangely through the house. With an exclamation of impatience at my childish want of nerve, I strode across the hall and flung open the drawing-room door. For the moment I got no further, for the scene before me completely paralyzed what little nerve I still possessed.

There was no light in the room except one candle which flared dimly on the mantelshelf, and guttered slightly as the draught from the doorway caught it; but seated in a low chair before the cold ashes of a long dead fire was Giles. His hands were clasped around his knees, and he was gazing straight before him with an expression which numbed me with a cold sense of fear and horror. Only once before had I seen him look so, and that was on the night the girl he loved forsook him for another.

He must have been conscious of my entrance though, for without looking at me he pointed to the open door which I still held in my hand. I closed it and the action recalled me partly to myself.

"What is it?" I gasped rather than spoke.

Then for the first time he looked at me and strove to speak, but for a moment, though his lips moved, so great was his emotion that the words refused to issue from between them. With a great effort he mastered himself and spoke, not collectively indeed, but, alas, too intelligibly.

"The baby—oh, Hal—those devils have stolen him, and - and Marjory—it has killed her," and with a hoarse sob wrung from him by the agony of the moment he covered his face with his hands, and I! I felt as though an earthquake had suddenly cut away the solid ground from beneath my feet.

One look at Giles told me how bitterly he was feeling the futility of his favoured powers of detection, since this was the end of it.

As though he defined my thoughts Giles looked up suddenly, and his voice grated slightly as he spoke.

"No, Harry, this is not the end. But sit down while I tell you all the circumstances—in a few minutes we must act."

I sat down as directed, while, in a voice that gathered strength and energy as he continued. Giles narrated the sad events of that fatal day. Briefly told they amounted to this: The nurse, that afternoon, had gone out to take tea with a friend and carried the baby with her. Returning home about six o'clock with the child in her arms, she was suddenly set upon by three men while crossing the churchyard, the baby torn from her grasp and herself knocked senseless by a blow on the head. When she came to, which must have been some considerable time afterwards, not less than half an hour at the least, she did the very worst thing possible. Rushing into the drawing-room as soon as she reached the Rectory, with the blood streaming down her face, she startled them all by shrieking out that the baby was lost, and in the hands of the men who had tried to murder the policeman. "The shock caused Marjory to faint," Giles continued, "and she has not yet recovered consciousness. We sent at once to A--- for the doctor, and he has been with her ever since, but failed to bring her back to life. We have sent to Oldtown for further medical aid and for the police. Meanwhile we are at a standstill. I was on the point of starting out to look for you when you came in," he concluded.

Sick at heart, and almost stupefied by the magnitude of the shock, I stood in that dimly-lighted room staring at Giles until a sudden knock on the front door brought me to myself.

"Dr. W.—," cried Giles, springing to his feet. "Richards has lost no time in fetching him."

"Richards?" said I, interrogatively, as he hastened to the door.

"Yes. He was here when it happened, and started for Oldtown at once." In another moment he had opened the door and admitted our old friend Dr. W----.

The Doctor grasped our hands in silence before removing his heavy ulster, from the pockets of which he quickly took the different appliances with which he had come provided, transferring them to the breast pockets of his coat with an easy unconsciousness of the effect which this little business always produces upon the anxious hearts of those for whom, at such moments as the present, every action of the trusted physician possesses a certain significance.

At the foot of the stairs he paused, and spoke for the first time.

"I know the circumstances: how long has she been unconscious?"

"About two hours and a half," Giles responded, with a certain

anxious inflection in his voice, and he glanced as he spoke at the Doctor's grave features, as if to gain some confirmation of the hopes-which he scarcely dared to entertain.

But the Doctor's face was inscrutable, and he merely said, "Ah!" in a tone which conveyed nothing. At the head of the stairs Ned met us, and the sight of his face completed the bitterness of that hour.

Poor Ned. His was a faith indeed! A faith of sublime self forgetfulness; a faith that had often removed mountains of doubts and responsibilities from the shoulders of others, frequently to lay the latter burden upon his own broad back. But he took his burdens cheerfully and gloried in the sense. His features were as calm and pale as chiselled marble; but round the mouth were certain hard lines, deep as in the face of an old man, and in his eyes a look of fierce despair. At the door of his wife's room Ned paused.

"I will wait here W——; you," with a pitiable attempt to smile, "you will not keep me in suspense longer than you can help."

He spoke calmly, but after glancing at him the doctor made a sign to me which I interpreted by slipping my arm through Ned's. Then I felt that he was trembling so that he could scarcely stand. Shall I ever forget those few minutes, for it could have been no more, though a seeming eternity. Giles believed her to be dead I knew, but I could not quite give up all hope, despite my better reason. I had not seen her, and so perhaps I found it easier to entertain the hopes which my heart dictated. I had heard of many cases of suspended animation, and Giles was no doctor, though we both had some little knowledge of surgery. I tried to say all this to Ned, but one glance at his face sufficed to still my tongue. Giles was standing motionless, his back against the wall, and only a slight, nervous movement of the head at times indicated how intensely he was suffering. Presently the door opened, and anxiously as I had been watching for it, I started like a girl and felt the warm blood rush to my head, so that my temples throbbed, but one look at the doctor's face sent it back to my heart with a cold chill.

The Doctor laid his hand upon Ned's shoulder, and his face was full of a great pity and compassion.

"My poor friend," he began.

Ned winced, and shrank as if from a blow.

"That will do," he muttered hoarsely, and turning quickly, he staggered away towards his small study at the end of the landing.

Dr. W—— turned hurriedly to me. "Go after him, my dear sir. You will tell him better than I can. She is not dead. That is all I dare say at present! The action of the heart is almost imperceptible, and even that was failing when I arrived. We have applied a stimulant—fortunately I came prepared—and respiration is just faintly perceptible now. If she recovers consciousness within two hours, we may begin to hope; if she relapses again—" he ceased abruptly with a silence more expressive than words, and hurried tack to his patient.

I followed Ned like a man in a dream. "She is not dead. She is not dead!" Those words kept ringing in my ears, and in spite of myself my heart gave a great leap of joy, and the strong hope of youth crept back, and strove in spite of reason to dispel the depths of sorrow and apprehension, which I knew, but would not acknowledge, to be better founded.

Ned was sitting, leaning slightly forward, with his elbows on the table, as I entered. He was gazing straight before him. His face white and set as the face of a cameo, not a muscle, not an eyelid quivered. There was a dreadful quiet about the whole pose that awed me, for I had never seen grief like this.

He started as I laid my hand upon his shoulder, and looked up at me, but I would not meet his eye.

"She is not dead," I murmured.

He grasped my hand with a pressure that was almost painful, and I continued slowly, wondering at my own control.

"They are doing their utmost. If she recovers consciousness within two hours they think that we may hope for her."

He bowed his face upon his hands. "God bless you for those words," he murmured. "But leave me now, Hal. I must learn to say 'Thy will be done.'"

He hid his face and turned away that I might not see his anguish, though, God knows, I could not trust myself to look at him, and I turned to leave him alone with his grief, for now even my presence seemed an intrusion. But at the door I paused for half a moment, as a deep sob came through the gloom towards me.

"Ned, Ned," I cried, "let us hope that His will is done."

He caught my drift and gave me a look I shall never forget, and then I left the room abruptly, for my strength was gone and I was but as a child.

### CHAPTER VIII.

### A TERRIBLE DISCOVERY.

At the head of the stairs I met Jensen, and one glance at his face assured me that he knew all. I believe there must have been tears in my eyes, the tears of a strong man's agony, for he would not look at me, but turned his head away and grasped my hand in silence.

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"This is awful, sir," he exclaimed brokenly, for amongst others Marjory had won the heart of this keen, shrewd man of the world.

Then pulling himself together he cried with an energy and decision strangely at variance with his usual cool, calculating demeanour, "We must lose no time, Mr. Brooke, if we would do any good. The police cannot be here for a couple of hours, perhaps longer, and by that time we must recover the child and restore it to its parents. Now mark this, and see what comes of quiet watching. Colonel Madison's house was broken into an hour ago, and some valuable plate stolen. This the burglars carried to the haunted cottage, and secreted there under my very nose. They are waiting there for their leader, who is to join them at ten o'clock, and then they will make tracks for good, as the neighbourhood is growing too warm for them, and the chief of the gang, Harding, is already suspected. All this I overheard while hiding in the yew hedge-vou might pass the place a dozen times and never see me. They are puzzled about the child, but Harding swore not to injure him, 'only to frighten that cursed parson,' as he said, but they evidently do not trust him. They are waiting in the wood at the back of the premises; with luck we may gain the cottage unobserved. Now come. Where is Mr. Ferney?"

"I am here," said Giles, appearing from his room, muffled in a thick coat and bearing mine over his arm. "Put this on, Harry, you will need it, for it's turning very cold. Your 'Colts' are in the pockets, loaded."

I nodded as he helped me into my coat, and then we followed Jensen downstairs without a word. Outside at the carriage gates we were joined by Richards, whose very existence up to this moment I had entirely forgotten. He carried a massive stick about three inches in diameter, newly cut from the Rector's drive. This addi-

tion to our forces was evidently part of Jensen's work, for the keeper spoke no word, but fell in quietly beside the detective.

We reached the cottage without misadventure, and by using great caution effected an entrance, as we hoped, unobserved. I have already described the domicile in question, together with its position, and our present mode of entering differed in few respects from that of the previous occasion.

But now our work was to begin in earnest, for once inside the cottage we found it intensely dark, and Jensen having halted at the bottom of a narrow flight of stairs, we were at a loss how to proceed, for we looked to him for instructions.

"Take off your boots," he whispered, and under less serious circumstances I could have smiled at the humour of this injunction. We saw its sense at once, however, and complied promptly and in silence.

"Now," he whispered, "follow me upstairs and make no sound."
There were not many steps to mount, perhaps twelve or fourteen in all, but the intense blackness which seemed to close us in as with an impenetrable wall, and the knowledge that the slightest stumble might render all our efforts abortive, sufficed to make our progress extremely slow, and it was some minutes ere we stood in a group upon the upper landing.

I must confess to a feeling of undefined creepiness as we stood there in the dark. The silence was as intense as the surrounding gloom, and a pin-fall would have sounded loud by contrast. I could hear the keeper just beside me breathing deeply, and the faint in-draw of his respirations irritated the rigid tension of my nerves.

"I think there's no one in here just now," Jensen whispered. "They are waiting down among the yew trees at the back. But they must return before long and get hold of all their stuff. Meanwhile I mean to reconnoitre. I have a dark lantern with me. Come."

But even then, for a moment, no one moved. There was something in our situation so altogether strange, so unlike anything we had ever before experienced, and the inky pall of blackness all around appeared so solid, so impenetrable, that the excitement which had carried us thus far, had begun to give place to a feeling of bewilderment, not unmixed with anxiety, the reaction producing a sensation of nervous expectancy which militated against prompt action.

Suddenly, from out of the darkness right in front of us, there broke a sound which seemed to turn our very blood cold, so sudden was it and so unearthly. Two harsh, discordant cries, loud yet ghostly in their inhuman tones.

My tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, and Richard's stertorous breathing ceased abruptly. Then from out of the inky blackness came a flapping sound, the rattle of a chain, and then two more of those blood-curdling cries. Even in that brief space of time I remember thinking of Scrooge's nightly visitant, the unquiet spirit of poor Marley; but my mind had scarcely framed the comparison when the detective's lantern flashed forth and revealed the author of those ghastly sounds.

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We were standing on a small landing, whose low ceiling, begrimed with dirt and hung with cobwebs, bore sombre witness to the absence of human habitants. Immediately in front of us were two doors, about four feet apart, communicating evidently with rooms whose lookout would be at the rear of the cottage. Against the short space of wall which intervened between those two doors stood a small common-looking chest of drawers. Standing upon this article of furniture, which was in an advanced state of dilapidation, was the midnight guardian of the premises, a large raven. A strange sentinel truly, yet not ill-fitting the evil reputation of the place. But that he was no voluntary prisoner to the circumscribed limits of his perch was evident, by his repeated and violent attempts to free himself from a chain which was fastened to a ring round his leg, and attached at the other end to a staple in the wall.

"We must silence that brute," cried Jensen, taking a step forward.

At the same moment Richards put out his hand to grasp the bird, and but for the fortunate intervention of my hand over his mouth all our efforts to surprise our enemies would have been rendered futile. For the raven had fastened on his finger, with a grip which called all the burly keeper's powers of vociferation into full play, and which even the folds of my pockethandkerchief barely sufficed to stifle.

"If you make a sound we are lost," I breathed in his ear, with, I fear, a no very gentle pressure upon his vituperative organs.

Meanwhile Giles had set himself to coaxing the bird, by means of those blandishments of which the dumb animal lover always seems to possess an exhaustless stock, to induce the bird to release its hold. In this he was soon successful, greatly to our relief, for I had much difficulty in restraining Richards from an attempt to strangle the bird with his left hand, and any noise at that juncture would have been fatal. I have often been struck with the power which Giles seems to possess over animals, but never more so than at that moment.

"I don't think he will make any more noise," Giles remarked, as the raven's angry fluttering gave place to a quiet, unruffled acceptance of his caresses. "It would look suspicious if anyone were to come up and find him dead."

The detective looked doubtful.

"I don't know," said he. "Perhaps you're right though. Come on anyhow. We've wasted enough time already."

Opening the door to the left, Jensen entered noiselessly, and following him, we advanced across the room until we stood by the open window. Outside all was dark, but we could hear the voices of several men beneath the window talking in low tones. So Jensen was right, he had tracked them down after all, and I acknowledged to myself that he was possessed of brains more than I had given him credit for.

- "What had we better do?" Giles whispered.
- "Why, sir, I think our best move will be to lie down on the stairs until they come in, and then nab them. You see if we do that they can't get at their stuff without moving us," and he chuckled softly to himself in the dark.
  - "What do you mean?"
- "Come out of here and I'll tell you; they might hear us talking. Quietly now; no stumbling—damn that bird!" for as he closed the door once more the raven gave vent to a sonorous croak. "Now," he continued, "we had better wait on the stairs, it is darker there than anywhere, and as soon as they enter the cottage we can drop over into the passage, and cut off their retreat. Stay though. As I was in that room I heard an engine working at no great distance. Surely there are no trains running at this time of night?"
- "I fancied I heard a puffing sound not unlike an engine," I replied, "but I confess it puzzles me to account for it."
  - "I heard he," said Richards gruffly, "'tis a ballasting train."
  - "What?" cried Jensen sharply,

"Why," returned Richards, "sometimes they sends trains along of a night with loads o' chalk and ballast stuff, to chuck out on the 'bankments to strengthen them up like. I suppose they sends 'em along o' night time, because they might get runned into in the day." This was evidently an afterthought.

"Ah!" said Jensen, "and the line is not more than a couple of hundred yards to the back of the cottage. Of course, once in Winchester the burglars would find trains at almost any time in the night to convey them and their booty to London."

"By Jove! you're right," exclaimed Giles. "I should never have thought of that."

"But is it possible," I asked, "that these men could have accomplices on the line, and in the service of the company?"

"More than possible," returned the detective grimly. "Men of this type might have accomplices in any capacity. But what we have to do now is to catch them." So saying he led the way and we were soon all seated silently on the stairs, in such a position that when the burglars should enter the cottage, their heads, as they stood in the passage, would be almost on a level with our hands.

And now commenced, I think, the most painful time in all that trying night; for we had time to think. While events were in operation, our minds and bodies being both actively engaged, we had no opportunity to indulge the awful fear that, now in the stillness came creeping back, to knock with relentless hand at the icy portals of our hearts, and numb with its nameless horror the faculties most needed for our enterprise.

Was the baby dead? Could man be found inhuman brute enough to—— Ugh! my mind faltered and revolted at the bare suggestion, prompted by the very terror that possessed me.

Presently the detective crept away. He was gone some minutes, and when he returned there was a heaviness and want of caution about his movements which accorded ill with his previous conduct.

"Anything wrong?" I queried, as he sat rather heavily down on the stair above me.

"Gone," he answered shortly. "But wait, they'll be back again soon. They must come in here to get their plunder. We're sitting on it." In spite of the dogged conviction in his tone, I, for the first time, began to fear that after all the thieves had escaped us, though

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that, in itself, would be of small moment, if only we could recover the child.

How long we had sat there in the darkness I cannot say, when suddenly there rose a sound that seemed to paralyze our very souls, so awful was it and so ghastly. A long, low howl, commencing softly, yet with frightful intenseness, it rose slowly with an ever increasing volume, until the very air around us vibrated to the ghostly cadence. Then falling gradually it died away into a long, pulsating, wailing note, fading away once more into darkness and silence—a darkness that could be seen, a silence that could be felt.

The hair on my head rose slowly as though an icy blast were passing through it; the sweat burst from my forehead in great drops; I was conscious of a strange clutching at my throat.

At that moment to my relief, Jensen turned the slide of his lantern and a flood of light streamed out. Glancing at him I saw that his under lip was trembling slightly, but the hard lines about his eyes had not relaxed. Giles' head was in shadow, and I could not judge of his expression, but Richards' face was ghastly, and he was trembling from head to foot.

Creeping to the foot of the stairs, Jensen laid his hand upon the door of the room which Giles and I had burst into on the night of our first arrival in Leigh. Even as he grasped the handle the sound rose again, louder and more clear. As it died away Jensen turned the handle, and another moment saw us all within the room.

In the middle of the floor lay a pile of loose bricks, and in the place where they had been removed we saw a large, square trapdoor with an iron ring in the centre. But, ah! God! what was that lying beside the trap-door? With a cry I staggered forward, and grasped in my hands a little bundle of infants' clothes. As I did so, Jensen, bending forward, raised the trap-door in the floor.

Immediately from the black hole beneath came the loud and savage baying of fierce hounds.

The detective flashed the bright light of the lantern downwards, and to my dying day the scene that met our gaze below will remain fixed indelibly upon my brain.

A short flight of wooden steps led down to a room about the size of the one in which we stood. Chained to the foot of the steps were two enormous dogs, one a mastiff, the other a pure-bred bloodhound,

their ferocity being amply attested to by the way in which they bayed at us, and strained at the stout chains which held them.

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But, horror of horrors!!! There on the floor between them lay the naked form of a baby. A second glance sufficed to assure us that it was Marjory's child. There are situations in life which the bald medium of speech is wholly inadequate to portray; and I cannot attempt to describe the crowning horror of this moment. I have even been advised by certain friends to omit this incident altogether, but that course has appeared to me impossible, since so much of the interest of the story hinges upon the fate of this child. Also, when I have a tale to tell I like to tell the whole of it and not a part. Therefore let it stand.

It was not until this moment that I remembered my curious encounter with the seeming mad woman in the earlier part of the evening. Subsequent events had, for the time, entirely obliterated it from my mind. But now in a flash I recalled the agonized face of that girl, and I seemed to hear again those words which, though little heeded at the time, bore now a fatal significance. "Oh, the baby, the lovely baby! oh, God shut their mouths, shut their mouths."

Fool that I was not to have seen and traced the connection at once. And yet, had I done so, of what avail? As the light from the lantern shone down, the child uttered a wailing cry, and one of the dogs with a faint whimpering sound, turned and licked his face with its great red tongue.

The detective drew a' revolver from his pocket and aimed at the head of the dog, which was barking fiercely and straining at its chain. Giles laid a restraining hand upon his arm.

"Must it be?" he said, almost entreatingly.

"There is no alternative," returned Jensen, quickly and sternly. 
"They will never allow us to go down, and if they grow more excited their savage blood will half madden them, and they might—" he stopped with a shudder that was more expressive than words, and looking down at the bristling brutes with their glaring, blood-shot eyes, we were fain to acknowledge the force of his reasoning.

Giles and I turned away as he again levelled the pistol. There were two sharp reports, each followed by a short gurgling cry, and then silence once more reigned supreme within the cottage.

### CHAPTER IX.

### PAID IN FULL.

I THINK that for some few minutes I was too stunned, now that the danger was past, to do anything. I remember seeing Giles go down and catch the child up tenderly in his arms, then remounting the steps he wrapped him carefully in his coat, and handed him to Richards, who disappeared from the cottage.

We waited then in silence for about ten minutes, when the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps warned us of our courier's return. Jensen's warning hiss checked the outburst of suppressed excitement which was visible in every line and gesture as he entered.

"The missis she's allright again," he exclaimed, "and she's ahugging and a-crying over the baby fit to break her heart, and t'e passon he's a helping her," and here the honest fellow had to stop, to gulp down his emotion.

Giles and I grasped each other by the hand, and two earnest prayers of thanksgiving ascended to heaven. Yet even as we stood there in that solemn moment, the detective, ever on the alert, had caught some sound without, for he closed the slide of his lantern, leaving us in darkness.

"They are returning at the back," he whispered. "Come quickly. Your work is now completed, mine is but begun." In another moment we had ensconced ourselves once more upon the stairs, and only just in time, for as we did so the door at the back of the cottage opened noisily, and we could hear several men enter the passage. They stopped immediately beneath where we lay crouched upon the stairs, and there was a momentary silence, broken, however, by Harding's brutal tones.

"Strike a light, Tom, it's too —— dark for anything." There was a sound as of someone fumbling in their pockets, then a scrape, a momentary flare, and the match expired as soon as ignited.

But that half second's flash had shown me there were three men in the passage, Harding being nearest the door.

The first failure, however, gave us but a momentary respite, for a second match being struck it flared up brightly. Even then we might have remained some moments unperceived, but one of the men, a great, tall ruffian, had his head on a level with the top of the

banisters where Richards was crouching, a few steps lower down than ourselves. The temptation proved too great for him. With a loud shout he raised his heavy stick, and brought it down with a crash upon the unsuspecting head. The man dropped like a stone.

In a moment Jensen, Giles and I had leaped over the banisters into the passage, but too late! Both men had already gained the door, and were speeding through the plantation of thickly-growing yews. We followed, not a dozen yards behind, and soon reached the open fields. Then the bright moonshine revealed the fact that there was but one figure ahead of us, so one of them must have given us the slip among the yew trees. But something in the appearance of the flying man convinced us that it was Harding, and we pressed on.

He was making straight for the railway embankment, where an engine was standing blowing off steam, and we strained every muscle to overtake him ere he reached the line. But it was not to be!

Giles was slightly ahead of us, being quicker on his feet, and as Harding reached the steep chalk bank, his pursuer was not five yards behind him. On the line directly in front of us was an engine, with a few trucks attached, from which a gang of navvies had been shovelling ballast on to the embankment, the sides of which they were now smoothing.

"Make for the engine," panted the detective as we rushed up the steep, crumbling bank.

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Both driver and stoker were leaning over anxiously watching something a short distance along the line, and as we reached the top we saw that Giles had grabbed his quarry ere he could mount the train, and that now they were struggling together at the top of the bank.

Suddenly they came to the ground with a crash, but in an instant Harding was up again and had sprung on to the rearmost of the trucks. Quick as thought the engine-driver turned and put out his hand to turn on steam, and as he did so Jensen and I made a simultaneous spring and landed beside him on the engine. Too late though, for even as we gripped our men, the great wheels revolved, and the engine started forward.

I grappled instantly with the driver, leaving Jensen to tackle the stoker, a younger and slighter man. My antagonist was a large, heavily-built man, and as I gripped him he attempted to throw me

backwards off the engine. Being foiled in this he freed one hand, and snatched at a heavy iron bar, the handle of which projected from the tender. It was just beyond his reach though, and seeing this he clenched his hand and struck at me savagely. But it was useless. The fingers of my right hand had closed upon his throat, and holding him well away so that he could not strike me—which owing to the great length of my arms I was well able to do—I slowly choked him as he stood. He struggled fiercely, but to no purpose, and in two minutes he sank senseless to the floor.

Then I looked round to see how the detective had fared. He and his antagonist were on the floor, the stoker uppermost, and when I caught sight of them he was making violent efforts to strike Jensen over the head, with a hammer used for breaking the coal, while the latter was endeavouring to frustrate his malevolent intentions by holding on to his wrists with all the strength he possessed. My intervention, however, brought this somewhat strained situation to a speedy end, and in less time than it takes to tell, our two adversaries were bound and handcuffed.

The question now was what to do. Harding we knew was on the train, and if we stopped it he would jump off and escape. On the other hand, where was Giles? Had he succeeded in following Harding on to the truck, or no? Turning, we glanced back through the glass eyeholes at the back of the engine, and then stood paralysed at the sight which presented itself to our astonished vision.

Coupled to the tender of the engine was a tall, flat-roofed luggage van, which, either through laziness or oversight on the part of the officials, had not been detached from the engine ere it was despatched upon night duty with its load of trucks.

Harding, apparently, had crawled over the trucks until he had reached the roof of this van, and then, finding himself still pursued by his relentless enemy, he had turned at bay. As Jensen and I caught sight of them, they were standing up with their arms locked together. Giles had been obliged to rid himself of his coat in climbing over the trucks, and was consequently without firearms.

They swayed as they stood to the motion of the train, and how they managed to keep their balance I cannot think, but I suppose that in a manner they supported each other. I drew a pistol from my pocket, and through the glass eye-hole I covered the swinging form of Harding, but I dared not pull the trigger. The fall of one meant death to both! Jensen read my hesitation, and turned swiftly with the intention of shutting off steam.

At that instant some inexplicable inspiration made me turn my head, and cast a glance ahead of the flying engine. To my dying hour I shall never lose the memory of that awful moment.

Dashing out the glass behind us with my pistol, I shrieked in a voice rendered shrill and piercing by the agony of my fear: "Down, Giles, down." Just in time he heard me. Suddenly losing his hold upon Harding he crouched low upon the roof of the van, and then strove with one hand to hasten the fall of the staggering robber. But too late!

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There was a rattle and a momentary reverberation as we passed beneath the low brickwork of an archway, and Harding was gone!

Yes! swifter than the fall of the guillotine, more deadly than the descent of the headsman's axe had been the onset of the solid masonry, and Harding, the villain, had gone to his last account.

# A Warning.

Deep, deep beneath the sea, a billow cried:
"How merrily my sister-wavelets play,
So far above me in the azure bay,
Could I, like them, dance on the foaming tide."

The wish vouchsaf'd, for which yon billow sighed,
It swiftly glided unto light of day,
But scarce, alas! was kissed by sunshine's ray,
Than, cast upon the tide-worn strand, it died!

To appraise his fate, I would each one were feign
Content within Home's narrow circle, nor
E'er seek to venture forth on Life's wild main,
But, in obscurity, for evermore
Dwell, without wish day's fleeting beam to gain—
Like wind-tossed spray, to perish on the shore!

(From the German of Kerwegh),
By Baroness Swift.

# A Dream of Nations.

By MARIAN ELLISTON.

I DREAMED,—and in my dream I was standing, hidden in the shadow of a projecting rock, looking over a far-reaching moorland. As I stood there a party of men passed me, deep in eager talk. I could see their proud bearing, as they stood out clear in the brilliant moonlight, and the well-poised head of the one whose words I caught as they passed: "Her proudest boast is her humanity." And from their bearing I knew they must be some nation's noble sons.

Quickly following them came another in military garb. As he ran he waved high his unsheathed sword, that in its undulled lustre reflected starlight and moonbeam. And as he waved it he shouted, "Excalibur, Excalibur!"

Then came by a band of young knights, and I heard one of them exclaim, "The oppressed never cried to her in vain." And another responded eagerly, "The glory of her knighthood is to preserve Her Name as the terror of the oppressor, and the friend of the persecuted."

Close behind, but with slower tread, came two, in robe of priest and bishop, praying as they came, "That she may ever help and comfort all that are in danger, necessity and tribulation." Then they paused for the congregation that followed them to come up—a vast concourse they were, as of the people of a mighty nation. There, kneeling on the moorland I heard the bishop pray again: "That this people whom Thou hast blessed may defend all women and young children." And the people responded: "We beseech thee to hear us, O, Lord." Then he prayed again: "That this Thy nation, that is called by Thy name, may show pity upon all prisoners and captives." And the people responded again; "Both now and ever, vouchsafe to hear us, O, God."

And I pondered, and wondered!

### II.

DARK clouds rose out of the sea, and darkened over all the sky. The starlight was blotted out, and the moonbeams smothered in their struggle to shine through the murky masses. The wind soughed and moaned, and the sea sobbed sullenly. Presently the thunders rolled across behind the clouds, and the lightning flashed out luridly; the trees groaned and creaked, and the rain fell.

Between the peals of thunders I thought I heard the grinning howls of devils, and the demonish laughter of devil-possessed men. Sometimes the clash of swords rang above the storm. Sometimes the moans of dying men added weird terrors to the night. Now I could plainly hear the shrieks of women in agonised torture, calling for the rescuing help of all true men. Again, the wails of little children broke upon my ear—of little children too soon sent back to Heaven—till every breath of the night air seemed alive with the Spirits of both Heaven and Hell.

In the lurid flashes of the lightning I could see far across the moorland, terrible scenes of butchery and desolation—the scenes, whence arose together the howl of devil and brute, and the prayer and moan of the helpless and dying.

Then a voice from Heaven flashed out above the thunder, saying, "Who will rise for Me against the evil doer? Who will stand up for Me against the workers of iniquity?"

And I watched, and waited.

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### III.

And with one impulse God-ward and man-ward the congregation praying on the moorland rushed forward. No man among them but girded on his sword—no woman held back her dearest.

But the party of counsellors I had first seen gazed amazed and reproachful at their haste. "Why this action so rash and unseemly? Why this indiscretion so ill-advised and injudicious?"

"The Voice of the Lord and the cry of human suffering call us to rescue," they reply.

"Nonsense," broke in the Lord-leveller of High Aspirations,

"this is merely emotional sensationalism. Let me beseech you, dear people, not to be led away by excitement and fanaticism. Rely on us and our wisdom, and on no account suffer yourselves to be influenced in this way by the rhetoric of the Clergy or the enthusiasm of the Press."

"Then do our beasts of humanity and religion mean nothing?" demanded the people,

"Precisely," answered the Chief Foster-father of Statistics. "At least they mean nothing but respectability of reputation. The last thing we dreamed of was that they should be supposed to mean action. Religion and humanity are not to be taken seriously as integral parts of the life of a nation, of course. Surely no one ever conceived anything so purely Utopian! They are merely ornamental theories to plume ourselves on when convenient, and to be promptly forgotten when they interfere with the course of Formality and Red-tapeism."

And while they were busy dissuading the mystified public from interference with brutality, I saw a troop of white gowned and youthful warriors rush past them to the rescue. And the powerful nation arguing with its Counsellors, set up a ringing cheer. Loud and louder their hurrahs echoed and resounded.

"Cease this indecent shouting," roared the angered Counsellors. "Are we, a civilised and highly respectable Power, to give our support to a band of impertinent boys who put us to world-wide rebuke for neglect of duty, by filling up our omissions themselves—and without our consent? Snub them sharply at once, and effectually!"

But the congregation was roused beyond silencing, and they retorted hotly, "What? Support oppression and oppose rescue? The Church, and the Schools, and the Press, and the Poets you have given us for theoretical ornaments have become to us facts, not occasional conveniences, and we live for liberty and humanity.

And again and again their cheers echoed and re-echoed to the cheering of the little rescue band gallantly defying oppression; till the rebukes of the temporisers were silenced in the anthem of song that cheered the warriors on.

Most people maintained that any and that war a line service.

# Damocles, or the Gates of Janus.

## By THEODORA CORRIE.

Author of "In Scorn of Consequence," "Petronella Darcy,"
"Only the Ayah," etc., etc.

"Who lent thee, child, this meditative guise?
Who mass'd round that slight brow, these clouds of doom
Ere the long night, whose stillness brooks no star,
Match that funereal aspect with her pall
I think, thou wilt have fathomed life too far,
Have known too much—or else forgotten all."

M. ARNOLD.

### CHAPTER I.

Time stands still for no man, and the leaves of a book are more easily turned than the pages of nature: in this chapter let us leave La Navette and the stormy French coast far behind us, let us banish winter, and call up spring in its place: spring in the south of England, and at Godwin's Rest.

It would have been hard to find, anywhere, a lovelier old house than this one. Seen in the bright sunshine of a May afternoon, the place looked like an ideal representation of the middle ages, floated down the stream of time, to an anchorage on the shores of the nineteenth century.

Though approached from the western side by an avenue of beech trees, the whole front of the building faced south. Below the windows ran two terraces of carefully kept turf; and beneath these again, down a flight of marble steps, stretched another level of green sward, unbroken in its smooth expanse, save where an ancient sun-dial stood up in the centre of the grass. Beyond the green terraces, bordered only by a sunk fence, lay a water meadow, through whose reeds and rushes flowed a narrow but rapid river. Behind the meadow rose the fine timber of a large park; once a part of the Godwin estate, but now owned by Lady Evelyn Thorne, whose husband had bought the property, and had subsequently died.

Most people maintained that Godwin's Rest was a lovelier place

than Godwin's Chase. The house was an older one; originally the family residence, and only turned into a Dower House by John Godwin's grandfather, who had built the Chase, on a plan of his own, in the year eighteen hundred.

Certainly the outlook at the Chase was less picturesque than the outlook at Godwin's Rest. The house, standing on a plateau of rising ground, could hardly have been better placed. All against the windows grew climbing roses, and passion flowers, just now coming into leaf; and about the garden, at certain intervals, were clipped box and yew and bay hedges: the last remaining remnants of an ancient stiffness, handed down from the days of "ruffs and cuffs and farthingales."

Out of the wreck of his possessions, John Godwin had done well to keep the Dower House, and the Manor Farm belonging to it. Some people wondered that he should care to settle here, and live so very quietly, in a neighbourhood where his father had formerly been a great landowner, and a member of parliament: but John seldom troubled himself about the opinions of the rest of the world. After a wandering, adventurous life he had returned to Godwin's Rest; and it seemed as if he meant to remain there, at any rate for the summer months of each year.

On the May afternoon of which I am writing, he was seated in his study, a long oak panelled room facing the green lawns; while on a low cushion, lying on the floor by the window, a boy was half reclining, arranging a handful of spring flowers in a china bowl. A slender boy with closely cropped hair, save only where one bright wave still fell squarely cut, French fashion, across a white brow. May, and early roses, giant kingcups and a piece of stolen apple blossom lay spread out on the wide window seat; and as the childish fingers picked up one flower after another, John Godwin's eyes followed the movements of the busy hands, as tenderly as the eyes of the Countess would have followed them, only a few months previously.

The master of Godwin's Rest was a handsome, soldierly-looking man, with a sunburnt complexion. One empty sleeve showed a token of his Italian campaign; yet, glancing at him now, a casual observer might have found it hard to believe that he had only returned to England nine months previously to die: so, at least said his sister-in-law. At first Godwin could not venture to contradict

this statement. Gradually in his secret heart he began to disbelieve in it altogether. By the time he had been at home four months, he was creeping about with the aid of a crutch; and after a while he discarded artificial support. The wound in his leg healed very satisfactorily, and he began trying to fly fish with one hand, attended by a water keeper. And when Mrs. Godwin talked of "artificial strength," and preached resignation, John inwardly bade resignation be hanged, and went on fishing. Many men, severely wounded as he had been, would have died; but Godwin, on his first return had been fortunate in the skilled treatment of a clever surgeon; next to this he possessed a splendid constitution, and, much to his doctor's "and his own satisfaction" he struggled back to life and health.

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The vexed question of his recovery once settled, his thoughts turned first to the child he had left in France as a baby-the little son whom he had not seen for ten years. In answer to his letters, Madame de Follet wrote that the proposed journey must be delayed, as the boy was at death's door with a nervous fever. Upon receipt of this news Godwin started at once for La Navette. He was absent for some weeks, and on his return to England he brought Paul back with him. For the last month the boy had been established at Godwin's Rest. His two little girl cousins regarded him curiously. His aunt welcomed him with sufficient kindness, but with no great warmth of manner. If she had ever been capable of a great passion, she had spent it all on her dead husband, by her own account. She was a handsome woman, brown haired and brown eyed, in the Madonna style of beauty: but there was something monotonous in her dreamy, graceful movements, and her manner seemed to say that she lived in a land where it was "always afternoon." Her voice, low pitched and trainante, might easily have made a listener imagine her to be afraid of waking somebody up. Her father and only brother had fallen in the war; and she had only one living relation left-a distant cousin, M. de Brie by name, who, for the last ten years had rented her childhood's home, and sole property; the Palazzo Piarell, a small but lovely estate in Sicily. For various reasons of a substantial kind, Mrs. Godwin preferred to live in England; but in her secret heart, she styled her comfortable home a banishment.

Paul soon noticed that the pathetic stories which his aunt drew of

the war were all in reference to her own sufferings. Without defining the reason, he infinitely preferred the tales told by his father. Garibaldi, Mazzini, Ruffini, and other Italian patriots soon became to him not merely names, but living personalities. Godwin's whole heart had been in the war, and he was never tired of talking over past events, nor Paul of listening. From the very first the boy had turned instinctively to his father. Thin, pale, and quiet he was utterly changed from the bright-faced climber, who had scaled the cliffs at La Navette. He looked like a shadow of his former self. Of the illness that had all but robbed him of life, and from which he was even now recovering, he never spoke. Before the shock he had received on that February night his reason had wellnigh tottered; and if the Countess had called his illness brain fever, instead of nervous fever, she would have been nearer the mark. While still in a semi-conscious state he had been moved from La Navette to Les Graces, in order to be nearer to medical advice; and with his first returning sense of life, he had been aware of his father's presence, side by side with his grandmother's anxious face. His mind shrank at first from all thought of his illness as if branded with a horror of great darkness. But gradually the mental fog which had mercifully blotted those terrible weeks of pain and fever, rolled away. Past events, no longer blurred and confused, like the fragmentary reflections in a shattered mirror came clearly back to him. He had a perfect recollection of the cause of his illness and of the explanation of its attendant circumstances, made to him subsequently by his grandmother, during his convalescence: an explanation which seemed to have sealed his lips. Locked away in his young heart lay the shadow of a family skeleton, a skeleton which his father had hoped to keep from him for ever, but which chance or fate had revealed all too soon. There were times when he dreaded to be alone. He never spoke of this fear, and if left by himself made no complaint; but when twilight came on, he would follow his father about the house like a small shadow, as if the strong man's presence furnished a talisman against the growing of the darkness.

From the very first Godwin discouraged all mention of the boy's old home; and the reticence seemed a mutual one. To his father Paul never spoke of the past. Perhaps Godwin mistook the nature with which he had to deal. Childhood has its own reserve, of an

all but impenetrable kind; but it is not always well to leave such reserve unbroken. The most curious thing about Paul at this time, was the habit of silence in which he seemed enwrapped. He seldom uttered a word; no one had heard him laugh since his arrival: and if asked a question, more often than not his only answer was a bend of the head. It was not apathy, or any lack of intelligence which made him so quiet. Sickness often opens strange doors, and Paul had been in shadow-land during all the earlier spring time, on the very borders of death: and had come back enfolded in an atmosphere which scarcely belonged to this world. The gaze of the dark eyes bore a far away look; a look that pierced space, as if detached from its bodily surroundings. More than anything else this still gravity distressed John Godwin.

"Child," he would say, "what are you thinking of?"

At this question Paul would come back with a start to reality.

"I am thinking things out, father."

"You think too much: try to forget," his father would say persuasively: but to this suggestion Paul never made any answer.

Perhaps some of his happiest hours were spent when he could creep away from everybody to a sunny attic upstairs, which he called his play room. Godwin's Rest possessed a good deal more accommodation than the necessities of the family required. The house, a very old one, originally used as a monastery, had been altered and added to from century to century by various owners. The whole of the front of the building was Elizabethan, with a large hall in the centre filling a considerable space. This hall connected two wings which stretched themselves out to the right, and to the left of the main entrance. Above the left wing were several unused bedrooms where the children loved to play on wet days; and over this floor again came a good sized attic, half filled like its corresponding attic in the other wing, with lumber.

Paul soon discovered this retreat, and begged leave to call it his own. His father, only too glad to humour a harmless fancy, formally made over the attic to the would-be occupant. The superfluous boxes were cleared away to leave room for the furniture, selected and retained by Paul. An old fashioned carved table remained in one corner of the room, together with a dwarf bookcase placed beside it. A chippendale chair and a low stool were set by the table, and at the far end of the attic stood a pretty old spinet,

once played upon and loved by John Godwin's mother, but now banished by Mrs. Godwin to make room for a grand piano in the downstairs sitting-room. Paul had no taste for music, but the spinet, carved and painted, had taken his fancy. He had brought a box of books with him from La Navette, and up here, where the servants never came, he reigned supreme. The attic boasted two sets of windows: one facing north, the other south. The north window looked upon the back garden, and a young plantation of larch trees. The south window faced the river, the terraced lawns and the sun-dial. Of the two this latter view might well have seemed the more attractive, but Paul preferred the northern outlook, since on a clear day, far, far away, beyond the larches a faint blue line might sometimes be seen, betraying the distant sea.

Alone in his sanctum, the boy would sit curled up hour after hour, like a second Gautama, with his chin on his hand, while Bellissima crouched at his feet. Here, too, he could watch the wild life on the river: the quarrels of the dabchicks, and merry moor-hens; and the tiny island amid-stream where every year the swans had a nest. Above, and again below the belt of green, the river, branching from the main stream, parted in four wide arms, like a drawn out cross, against the head of which came the long water-meadow. At first after the sea, the river view seemed tame to Paul; but gradually he grew to love the clear deep stream, which slipped out of sight behind the trees in the park: the water taking a sudden dive, and falling in a torrent of foam through a great eel-hatch. The murmur of this cascade, itself unseen, came across the meadow, and over the terraces at all seasons of the year, like a voice from the spirit of the woods saying, hush!

But there were other reasons why Paul liked to be here. Had John Godwin known all the reflection that went on behind that passive exterior, he would surely have endeavoured to win the boy to speech. Strong feeling denied all outlet is apt to centre itself with strange persistence upon the past. The look, last seen on his grandmother s face, weighed far more heavily upon Paul than all his father's counsels to forget. Silence does not always mean acquiescence, rather the contrary. And no one realised how much time Paul spent alone in the attic, and not in the play room beneath it.

His solitude was first invaded by his younger cousin, Henrietta.

One afternoon, about a month after his arrival, the boy was sitting in his favourite Buddha-like attitude, when there came a sudden imperative thump low down on the door panels. At the sound of the knock Paul rose, slowly crossed the floor, and opened to the small intruder.

"What do you want, little one?"

"I want you," said Henrietta. "May is with Mamma, and I have been cross, and Sophie says that she does not like naughty children in the nursery, and Mamma said she would not have me downstairs, and so I have come to you to get good."

Paul was not proof against this form of persuasion, yet he admitted his small cousin with a sigh. The poodle, being in a more hospitable frame of mind than its master, rose, wagging its tail, and offering a paw in a very engaging manner.

Paul would not have said so, but he viewed Henrietta's entrance with secret reluctance. He wanted to keep the attic to himself, and this feeling was dictated by no selfish motive, since his cousins had other playrooms besides their nurseries. Had he been questioned he could not have explained his reason for thus shutting himself up. He would have said truly that he liked to be quiet, but this was not all at the bottom of his heart lay that sweetest of all virtues, an unconquerable fidelity. In the midst of this happy family life the thought of his grandmother's loneliness haunted him. Therefore, all alone, he had created for himself a nook, where, by the aid of imagination, he could conjure up some memory of the beloved figure. At times the picture created by his dreams became so real that he could scarcely believe himself to be in England; and this afternoon, with the old fairy tale book in his hand, he had been far away in spirit when the little Henrietta demanded admittance.

Nevertheless, from the first day of his arrival, he had given his allegiance to his small cousin. Perhaps because she was the fairest thing that his eyes had ever rested upon. Accustomed to be petted by everyone, save by her mother, she accepted all homage with a certain baby graciousness that was very attractive, and that had early won for her the nickname of the "Princess." She was a beautiful child with a regular delicately-featured face; lit by a pair of glorious dark eyes, and framed in a flood of deep golden curls. The French bonne declared Mademoiselle Henriette to be as wild as a hawk, and said that surely there must be gipsy blood in her

veins; but the child's skin in its fair transparency contradicted this assertion. To-day there were traces of tears on the long eyelashes which Paul noticed, and the lips quivered a little as she asked: "Do you mind my being here very much?"

This appeal could meet with but one answer. Henrietta was enthroned in the only seat, and her host proceeded to do the honours in a manner that no longer betrayed any unwillingness, while Bellissima's softly wagging tail beat a flail-like accompaniment on the uncarpeted boards.

Henrietta's glance fell first on the fat volume which lay open on the table, and the picture of the Dryad attracted her instant attention.

- "Who is that?" she asked.
- "The Dryad: she was a fairy and lived in a tree, Henrietta."
- "I wonder she did not get tired of doing that, Paul."
- "She did get very tired of it; after a time she ran away. I will read you the story if you like," said Paul. He handled the book lovingly, while Henrietta, well-pleased at this suggestion, peeped over his shoulder at the pictures as he read. She could not quite understand the fairy tale, but it satisfied her idea of the marvellous. A certain sense of the forbidden, added zest to her attention; and the glowing descriptions of colour, and music, harmonised with her nature. For the child was an artist at heart, and the spirit of some old Greek ancestress looked out of her eyes; spoke in the setting on of her small head; in the slender taper fingers, and in the very gestures of her hands.
- "My grandmother used to read that story to me," said Paul when he had finished.
  - "You love her, Paul?"
- "Yes, I love her." The boy's whole heart spoke in his answer. He would have added more, but he had a feeling that his father regarded this subject as a forbidden one. Henrietta looked at him curiously.
  - "Why don't you speak of your grandmother?"

Paul sighed. How could he speak of her when he noted the shadow which the beloved name brought to his father's face, and his aunt's cold lack of responsiveness.

"I so not speak of her," he said, "because it seems to me that my aunt dislikes everything French, even the language."

"Mamma only dislikes French when she s obliged to talk it," said Henrietta, with unconscious irony. "I like it better than Italian, because you see I am nearly always with Sophie. Uncle John declares sometimes we sound like the tower of Babel. Mamma said I was naughty this afternoon because I mixed things up to tease May. You see," she went on, leaning her chin on one small hand, "you see, it is a great mistake that I am not a boy. I often wish I could turn in to one. Mamma sometimes says that the very sight of me is a disappointment to her. Sophie tells me that when I am grown up it will be different; but I do not grow very fast, and Sophie can't read stories as you do. I think, now that I have been here once I shall come very often, if I don't plague you too much."

There was something so innocently pathetic in this speech that Paul stooped and kissed the fair little face. If a treaty of affection is necessary to the happiness of some people, at this moment it was ratified between these two.

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Henrietta was devoted to her mother, but so far, sadly enough, the devotion seemed anything but mutual; and across the child's warm, impulsive nature the one great want in her life cast a shadow of timidity. No devotee worshipped the Pope as Henrietta worshipped her mother; but in a vague, undefined way, she could not help being conscious that she had sinned in the matter of sex; that in some manner Mrs. Godwin was justly aggrieved and saddened at her presence. For her beautiful, stately mother often sighed when she came into the room, and nearly always said, "Run away now, dear, your voice makes my head ache." No thought of resentment had ever yet entered Henrietta's mind, though Mrs. Godwin seemed destitute of all natural tenderness where her second daughter was May was the favourite: a fair-haired, blue-eyed chatter-box, who always took great interest in her "toilette," and dressed her dolls in imitation of the Paris fashions. If the passing joys of our childhood are great while they last, the griefs are for the moment proportionately bitter, and this afternoon a squabble, brought on by May's teasing, had doomed Henrietta to forego a long-promised drive, while the other twin had driven off in the carriage unpunished and placidly triumphant. Henrietta thus left to her own devices, betook herself upstairs with an inward conviction that the attic would prove a safe refuge, and her cousin a sure comforter. Languagei aut nave chusel menievrous gostele mus visMrs. Godwin had looked forward to Paul's advent with very dubious pleasure; but since his arrival a great revolution had taken place in her feelings. It really began to seem likely that the new comer would succeed in keeping Henrietta in order; a task never before satisfactorily accomplished by anyone else. The little princess had a knack of climbing trees, of tumbling into the river, and defying her nurse, an indulgent, good-natured woman over whom she ruled with a rod of iron. It would have taken a judicious person to manage Henrietta at this period of her life, and Sophie was not always judicious; and May, a tease by nature, and a favourite with the powers downstairs, usually proved victorious in any dispute carried to the drawing-room.

Now as the weeks rolled by, whenever the question arose: "Where is Henrietta?" the invariable answer came back, "Oh, somewhere with Paul, I suppose." Perhaps by the law of contrast the boy's quietude appealed to the little girl's more stormy disposition. Paul, languid yet, found his small cousin as fascinating as a pocket cannon. He never quite knew what she might do next, and he could not help loving her, even when she tried his patience.

As time went by, Henrietta grew to regard the attic in the light of a sanctuary. When in disgrace she would steal away to the top of the house to play on the old spinet; put Bellissima through his tricks, or, if Paul were there, coax him to read to her. Besides, in his absence she could always look at the pictures in Hans Andersen. She knew the place on the shelf where the book stood, wedged in between Sophocles and Plato; and her small hands could just pull down the tempting volume. Was not the poodle named after the dog in the "Bronze Boar?" Of course it seemed a pity that the story-book dog should have been a spaniel; but, as the little princess remarked once, by way of consolation, Bellissima could not be blamed for this piece of misfortune; and there was no mistake about he name, if there was about the dog. This logic was unanswerable. Strangely enough, of all the stories, Henrietta's favourite always remained the Dryad. The pictured face was the prettiest in the book, and the description satisfied her art-loving nature.

After a time, out of these readings the children developed a great fancy for what their nurse called "play-acting." At the top of the garden, as good luck would have it, there grew a beautiful live oak, and, close beside it, flourished a little pink chestnut, which Henrietta's

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baby hands had been guided to plant on her first arrival at Godwin's Rest. Beneath the shade of the "Dryad's Oak," the children held their mimic stage. They were very fond of going through the scenes in "The Old Bachelor's Nightcap." Often and often Henrietta used to say, "Lady Venus, Lady Venus, Tannenhäuser is here," in the hope of conjuring up some shape from the unknown; but alas! nothing either beautiful or terrific in character ever made its appearance in answer to her call. Paul frequently conned over his tasks in the oak tree; and Henrietta often sat there too, perched fearlessly aloft. She could climb as well as her cousin, and if her morning holland wrappers were generally stained a bright green by the end of the week, Sophie's good nature never betrayed the reason for so much extra washing.

May cared nothing for this kind of amusement; but of their poetical fancies and their tree climbing the other two children never wearied. In the fine weather they were a great deal out of doors, followed everywhere by Bellissima. The dog was so gentle and intelligent, and moreover so quick to learn any trick, that he provided a never failing source of amusement for both children.

Henrietta had a great many pets; rabbits, guinea pigs and a pair of beautiful white peacocks, whose fallen plumage decked the heads and dresses of many families of dolls; dolls who found in the little princess a mistress as capricious as a Persian Sultana, and in Paul a willing surgeon of the experimental school, and, more often than not, an undertaker.

As spring deepened into summer, Paul was destined to make a new friendship. One sunny afternoon, as he came round the corner of the house, in company with his cousin, he perceived in front of the hall door a low phaeton, drawn by a pair of black ponies; and on the driving seat he saw next a young man of about one-and-twenty years of age, with blue eyes, fair hair, and a thin but pleasant face.

"Why, there's Ted!" said Henrietta in an astonished voice. "Cousin Evelyn must have come back. I suppose she is calling on Mamma. Come, Paul, show Ted Bellissima. He loves dogs."

At this speech Paul came forward and shook hands, his French ease saving him from awkward shyness. Thus was accomplished the boy's first introduction to Lord Edgar Lisle, commonly called Ted, whose sister, Lady Evelyn Thorne, owing to the death of her husband, was now the owner of Godwin's Chase, and of nearly all

the property which young Godwin might one day have inherited, had it not been for that fate which so often compels children to pay some penalty for the sins of their ancestors. No such thought entered Paul's head; his attention had been caught by a crutch sticking up above the carriage rug, and Ted, noting the direction of his gaze, said simply enough, "I was as active as you are once, youngster, but crutches aren't bad things when one has been on one's back for three years."

He spoke in such a matter of fact tone that Paul gazed at him in wonder.

By this time Henrietta had clambered into the carriage with a delighted look on her face. "Oh! Ted," she said, "I am so glad to see you out of bed again. Are you going to stay at home now, as you did before?"

"I shall be at the Grange for the rest of the summer," he said, "and then Sol and I are off in the yacht, and we mean to carry your Uncle John away with us too, if we can, Princess."

Henrietta leaned her pretty head confidingly against his shoulder; it was easy to see that these two were old friends.

"Then I can come to tea with you once a week as I used to," she said. "May I bring Paul too, and Bellissima? They both behave better than I do, Ted; even Sophie says so."

Ted Lisle laughed. "Come, by all means, and the more the merrier, Princess. Does that poodle of yours always live on its hind legs?"

"You haven't shaken hands with him, that's why," said Henrietta. "Paul, do put Bellissima through his drill."

Over the merits of the dog the trio were speedily so deep in conversation, that they failed to notice the presence of another person: a lady, who came out presently on to the door-step, and with a well-pleased air stood watching the little group in front of her. She was tall, slender, and brilliantly fair, with coils of pale gold hair shining under a crape bonnet. Her eyes of a bright hazel were shaded by dark lashes, which showed in pretty contrast to her blonde colouring. After a few minutes she came forward and laid one hand on Paul's shoulder. At the light touch the boy started, turned round, and pulled off his cap, while Henrietta scrambled out of the carriage and put up her face for a kiss.

"Are you Paul Godwin?" said the lady smiling.

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"Yes, I am Paul," the boy answered gravely: "and you, Madame?"

The quaint politeness of his manner seemed to charm his questioner. "We are all relations here," she said. "I am Evelyn Thorne and your cousin by courtesy. Your father has just promised me that he will go yachting with my brothers this autumn; they want looking after badly. It is a pity that you can't go too," she went on, turning to Henrietta. "Ted always says that you are his best nurse. You must come to the Grange on Monday, and bring your cousin with you." She stooped to kiss the little girl, smiled again at Paul, and then, getting lightly into the carriage, whipped up the ponies and drove off at a pace which made both children stare after her in astonishment.

"What's the matter with the one you call Ted?" Paul asked.

Henrietta knitted her small brows. "It was a railway accident: a very bad one. Ted had his back hurt and two ribs broken, and the part you breathe with was hurt too. I used to be very unhappy about him. He is so big and tall, taller than Uncle John, that I thought if he died he would never go to heaven, that the angels would never manage to carry him up there; but that was ever so long ago. I know better now. Sophie told me that if people only have light hearts, it doesn't matter how heavy their bodies may be: besides Ted is always so cheerful, that I am sure he will get well some day."

"He doesn't seem to mind being ill," said Paul. "I should care dreadfully."

It was Henrietta's turn to look surprised now. "Care!" she said, "of course he cares, but only cowards make a fuss, and when they do it doesn't alter anything. I have often heard Sophie say that, when she has had to pull my loose teeth out. That's why I don't scream; and, oh, Paul," the little philosopher went on with a sudden change of voice, "the Grange is so lovely! It's a much prettier place than the Chase, you will see when you go there on Monday. When I grow up I mean to live at the Grange, always. Ted says I may, and you shall come too, if you like, and Bellissima." And having thus comfortably settled the affairs of her small universe, Henrietta obeyed the summons of the nursery bell and went indoors to tea, while Paul followed her more slowly.

Henrietta had only spoken the truth when she said that the Grange was a lovely place: as a matter of fact it was one of the loveliest places in England, very like Godwin's Rest if the latter house had been viewed through a double magnifying glass.

Harebrook Grange was only four miles away from Godwin's Rest, and barely two from the Chase. The Harebrooks, the Godwins and the Thornes, were all connected by marriage; and their relationship requires a word of explanation for the better understanding of the reader.

At the Grange lived the old Duchess of Harebrook-the belle of a former generation-a great heiress, and the only sister of John Godwin's father. Her fortune, inherited from her mother, had never been squandered in reckless extravagance, in the fashion affected by her brother. When she married the Duke he was already a widower with five small children, called respectively, Solway, Maurice, Evelyn, Ethelyn, and Edgar. At one-and-twenty the Duke had dutifully taken the wife selected for him by his parents: at five-andthirty he married again to please himself. For thirteen years Catherine Godwin counted herself a happy woman. Then troubles came swiftly: Maurice fell in the Crimean war, and Ethelyn, a delicate fragile girl, the pet and darling of the household, died at the early age of seventeen. The Duke himself did not long survive his daughter, and from the shock of this last loss the Duchess had never completely recovered. She had no children of her own, and she was not particularly fond of her eldest step-son.

Completely unlike his father in disposition and in habits, the present Duke could only be described as a good-looking indolent man, who disliked society heartily, and who could never be persuaded to take the smallest interest in politics. By his own account he suffered from chronic irritation of one lung; and a warm climate seemed to be so necessary to his well-being, that he only came to England for a few weeks every summer. During the rest of the year, his affections were equally divided, between his yacht and his violin. He was an excellent musician; and the sailors were wont to say that it must be a bad storm if his Grace couldn't fiddle through it.

Ted Lisle being at present an invalid, most of the Duke's social duties had gradually been taken up by a distant cousin—an ener-

getic, wealthy and practical young man; a regular destroyer of the family pheasants in England, and of the family salmon in Scotland; an enthusiastic fisherman, and a happy occupier of the family town house during the season.

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"Capital fellow, George, takes all that trouble off my hands," the Duke used sometimes to remark.

"Capital fellow, Sol, but mad as a March hare," this more frequently was the unexpressed opinion of George Clifford. The two seldom met, but they were very good friends, and the one filled up the social gaps left by the other.

People called the Duke eccentric. Mothers with pretty daughters smiled upon him in vain, for at two-and-thirty he was a confirmed bachelor. England might expect every man to do his duty; but it seemed likely that England would be disappointed where the Duke of Harebrook was concerned. He had a very sincere affection for his sister Evelyn; indeed she was the one woman whose companionship afforded him any real pleasure: and the only person who could sometimes persuade him to abandon his own pursuits for the benefit of other people's interests.

At seventeen Lady Evelyn married General Thorne. The General, a wealthy, elderly man, and the purchaser of the Godwin Estate, enjoyed his newly found happiness for a very brief space of time. Devoted to field sports, but always a careless rider, he broke his neck, out hunting, within six months of his marriage.

Lovely, well dowered and thus early bereaved, it seemed probable that Lady Evelyn would not long remain inconsolable. But ten years had elapsed since her husband's death and she was still a widow.

In days gone by, before the sale of the Chase, John Godwin had been constantly at the Grange. Report asserted that the Duchess wished her favourite nephew to marry an heiress, and had chosen a suitable parti for him in the person of one of her step-daughters; the two girls were twins, and much alike both in name and face, except that Ethelyn, delicate and fragile, leant always upon her more bright and active sister. At one time young Godwin's attentions seemed to the outside world to be equally divided; but whatever truth lay in the various rumours then flying about, nothing came of them. And nowadays, though time and death had set Evelyn and John free to form new ties, the latter was far too proud to attempt

to engage his cousin's affection, even had he wished to do so. A richer, or a more long-sighted man might not have burthened himself with the care of a sister-in-law's family; but then, according to the Duchess, John had always been a generous fool, and probably would remain one to the end of his life.

There are plenty of people in the world, and not the worst people either, who are deluded into imagining that their particular piece of pinchbeck is real gold. Possibly the most trying part of their mistake remains, when they leave their pinchbeck behind them as a precious and desirable legacy! And for the sake of the impulsive, warm-hearted dead and gone, those dearly loved ones whose shadows linger in so many households, we often allow a fictitious value to many worthless things; while all the time, at the bottom of our hearts, we recognise the pinchbeck. Yet what a fount of irritation lurks in these same legacies; from the shricking parrot to the illtempered lap-dog; from the ill-tempered lap-dog to the spoiled servant: the scale is an ascending one, culminating in that worst incubus of all, the relict of a near and dear relative. We know her, most of us, that complacent, correctly mournful person, who descends unresisted on some luckless household, to reign like a blister in the shrine of the departed: forging a dead name at every turn, while trading in pirate fashion with the treasures of memory and affection.

"No one ever appreciated my poor Laura; you will be kind to her, and to the babies, for my sake, won't you, John?"

These words lingered in John Godwin's ears, bringing back with them the rolling smoke clouds of Aspromonte, the battle-field strewn with the dead, and a face with a grey shadow upon it: the face of the high-spirited, devil-may-care, yet dearly loved brother, who always spent money like water, and then repented too late; and who had now flung away his own life, to save that of the elder man whose inheritance he had helped to squander.

And so in the shrine of the dead, Laura Godwin found a safe dwelling place, and her brother-in-law would never thrust her from it. Only at certain intervals he still went yachting, leaving the feminine half of the family in sole possession of Godwin's Rest. If the truth must be told, John found his sister-in-law rather an exhausting companion, and he had no wish to pass by the old back door of escape once more set open by his cousin. Besides, in former

days the yacht had been his own, and once on board the "Clytie," he always felt at home.

### CHAPTER II.

"Down the pale cheek long lines of shadow slope Which years, and curious thought, and suffering give, Thou hast foreknown the vanity of hope, Foreseen thy harvest, yet proceed'st to live."

M. ARNOLD.

As the summer went by, Paul's health steadily improved, and when the autumn came he was able to receive instruction from a clergyman who lived in the neighbourhood—a certain Mr. Darcy, a dreamy scholarly man, glad to eke out a scanty income by devoting some hours of his time to a day-boarder. This kind of teaching went on uninterruptedly for nearly a year, when Godwin decided to send Paul to school. The first preliminaries being once settled, other matters were soon brought to a satisfactory termination; and the time of departure drew nigh, all too soon for the happiness of one person. The little Princess, inconsolable at the thought of losing her playmate, followed Paul everywhere like a disconsolate shadow; tried unsuccessfully to help with his packing; and could hardly restrain her tears at sight of his locked and labelled box.

The evening before he started for school, Paul wandered into the study in company with his cousin. Godwin, seated there reading, presently began to listen in desultory fashion to the talk going on between the two children at the other end of the room.

"Why do you want to leave home?" Henrietta asked in dismal tones.

"Because I shall get on faster. You know to be an author one must study a lot."

"And when you have got on?" she said, dismissing the authorship without a second thought.

"Then I shall go to Oxford, my father says."

"And after that?"

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"Then I shall be grown up, Princess, and so will you be, too."

A flash of April sunshine lit the child's face into a strange loveliness as she said quaintly: "Mamma hopes that I shall be older and wiser

some day, and a comfort to her. Small children always make grown-up people's heads ache. That is why I have to be so much in the nursery now; but, oh! Paul, when I am really grown up, fancy being always with mamma dear, beautiful mamma! I want that, more than anything else. But it takes a long time to grow older, and sometimes the time seems such a long way off, too, doesn't it?" she ended wistfully.

"No," said Paul, "the future seems close to me; much too close." A shiver ran over him, and Godwin, looking up at the moment, was struck by the sharp contrast in the expression of the two young faces. There was an uncomfortable sensation in his own throat, not brought there by the newspaper, but by Henrietta's words.

The mirage of life looks very fair in the distance when we are young, yet to Godwin there was something unusually pathetic in the mental attitude of these two children. The one building on her mother's love, the other?—What was written on Paul's face? Surely not the subtle difference between one who has recognised the mirage for what it is, and one who is still deceived by the glamour of the show. It was a look to cast a shadow on any father's heart, for to the short and fleeting years of happy childhood the world's entrance-gate should be but an outlook of beautiful possibilities, where fear may have no pass-key, and doubt has never stolen an entrance.

Henrietta noticed the shadow on Paul's face, too, without understanding it.

"What do people have to do when they are grown up?" she asked.

"Oh, all sorts of things," said he lightly, as if trying to throw off some thought which had suddenly presented itself. The clasp of the little girl's hand tightened on his arm.

"What will you do? I don't care about other people," she whispered.

For a moment he stood silently gazing before him, then he said slowly, with apparent effort: "Some day, when I am grown up, I shall go back to France to visit my grandmother; and, if I can, I shall write a great play."

This was too dreadful! It was bad enough that Paul should be going to school: it was insufferable that he should talk of returning

to France. The idea put the culminating touch to the rising tide of Henrietta's grief. Her eyes dilated with a strange terror. She turned and clung to him sobbing.

"Don't go, don't: I couldn't bear it," she said. "It is like the swan fairy tale. If you do go away again over the sea, you will never come back, never!"

Paul stooped down trying vainly to soothe the storm he had raised, but the child paid no attention for once to his words or to his caresses. For a minute or two she stood clinging to him; then suddenly turned away, darted through the open door, and disappeared. He would have followed her had not his father called him back. Godwin had heard the question, but had not caught the answer; and he regarded Henrietta's grief as the natural herald of this first separation.

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Paul came almost reluctantly, while his father throwing down the paper, said kindly: "Have you ever thought about what you would like to do when you are grown up?"

He spoke with reference to a choice of profession, but Paul's instant answer startled him not à little.

"When I am grown up, before I do anything else, I am going back to La Navette to visit my grandmother."

It was the first time for more than a year that any reference had been made to the past. A feeling of disappointment shot through Godwin's heart. "I hoped at least that you were happy here," he said.

"So I am," said Paul eagerly, "it is not that I want to go back, except to see my grandmother. That place, La Navette, I hate it." A shiver passed over him now, a look dawned in his eyes which filled Godwin with uneasiness.

"I would far rather that you never went back to France again, Paul; why need you think of such a thing?"

"Because I love my grandmother. Besides, I made a promise: I mean to keep it too," the boy said. "Some people forget easily. but I—if ever I were to forget I think I should never forgive myself." He threw back his head as he spoke, every line of his slight figure betokening strong resolution. Then noting his father's expression, almost involuntarily, he added: "You will let me go back later on?"

For a moment his question remained unanswered, and in that

moment there rushed into his mind a sudden recollection of Madame de Follet's words, "Perhaps your father will wish you to forget." True, Paul wrote every month to his grandmother, and no one ever attempted to interfere with his letters; but in the absence of all outside sympathy a sense of unreality was already creeping over his correspondence. He was conscious now of a host of conflicting ideas, of a sense of defeat; times had changed, and he with them. That possibility once hinted at of not loving his father, had now become a part of the impossible. His very words, "you will let me go?" showed the change in his attitude from the old "I will." None the less, the promise made could not be passed by or easily abandoned. Ever since he had left La Navette his childish imagination had pictured Madame de Follet standing all alone on the shore, gazing out seaward, waiting for him. How would it be if she were to wait in vain? The remembrance of her face, sad, and desolate, rose now before him with a vividness "sharp as reproach," and his father's silence came upon him like the first clash of wills between those he most reverenced. To any child such a moment must be a terrible one.

Leaning forward he said at last, in desperation, "Father, do you wish me to break my promise?"

The strong painful vibration of the young voice, the beseeching eyes, the unusual pallor of the boyish lips, swept over Godwin, filling him with distress. Whatever may have been his own wishes, he was not proof against this entreaty. In this life the pain of one soul often buys the peace of another! Laying his hand on Paul's shoulder he said; "No, boy, no! I do not ask you to break your promise. When you are older, if you still wish to revisit La Navette I will not hinder you; neither am I so ungrateful as to wish you to forget your good grandmother. You must not misunderstand my silence; it arises from no lack of sympathy. But there are so many painful memories connected with the past, that it could not be good for either of us to discuss them; and you know that as well as I do."

He spoke kindly, tenderly even, but in his voice there was so much sadness that Paul could not attempt to prolong the discussion. He had gained the needed permission, and that was sufficient to satisfy him. Looking up gratefully, with the air of a person relieved from a heavy burden, he turned now and left the room.

But his father gazed after him with a sigh that was almost a groan.

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At that moment if he had his will, he would have buried La Navette fathoms deep at the bottom of the sea; nay, more, it almost seemed to him that he would have laid down his own life gladly, could he have held to those childish lips that so seldom smiled, a draught from the waters of Lethe.

(To be continued.)

# The Late Margaret Hungerford.

By HELEN C. BLACK.

Among the women writers of the age, the clever and brilliant little novelist, Mrs. Hungerford, occupied a prominent position. From the time that she gave to the public her first book, "Phyllis," written at the early age of eighteen. her works have enjoyed a vast popularity in every quarter of the English speaking globe, no less for the wholesomeness of tone and the human interest displayed, than for the ready wit, the merriment that bubbles over and so often melts into pathos, the poetic and vivid descriptions of scenery, and the occasional dramatic touches that so characterise her writings. And these writings were a reflection of her own pure and tender heart, her strongly sympathetic temperament, her bright and optimistic nature that refused to see aught but the best side of people and of things.

Never seeking nor caring for notoriety, Mrs. Hungerford's life was a poem in itself. The moving spirit in a most devoted family circle, occupied with incessant literary work, with her flowers, her poultry yard, and countless country pursuits, she cared but little to mingle with the world of society and of fashion. Her joys and pleasures lay close to hand, and in her home, her husband and children, she found her chiefest delight. Yet it was no narrowed life that she led. On the rare occasions when business called her to London, she and her husband—lovers to the last—thoroughly enjoyed a few days recreation among the picture galleries, the theatres, and in the society of a few dear and valued friends, and would then count the hours

that restored them to their peaceful, picturesque Irish home and the eager welcome of the children. A home now left desolate! She was seized with the most severe form of typhoid fever during the last days of October, 1896. For many weeks, her strong vitality and good constitution gave cause for hope, then came a period of despair, again a rally, and after repeated relapses, she succumbed on Sunday morning, January 24th, and, surrounded by those she loved so well, passed peacefully away to the silent land, "where beyond these voices there is peace." Over the grief of her bereaved ones a veil must be drawn, and I go back to the early days when her literary career, destined to be so successful, first began.

From childhood her natural proclivities were strongly marked, and some of the little stories and fairy-tales that she wrote and related to her play-fellows are still to be seen in her childish caligraphy. At the age of sixteen, she devoted herself seriously, or I may say gaily, to literature as a profession, but nothing was published until "Phyllis" was launched by Messrs. Smith and Elder, the book having been read and accepted for them by Mr. James Payn, then their reader.

Not to every young author does success come at once, or such a success. The novel went into many editions at home and abroad, brought her many orders from Transatlantic journals, and, as she used modestly to remark, was a "constant surprise" to her. "Molly Bawn" quickly followed and largely increased her fame; under the title of that book, which "made her name," she veiled her identity for many years, and continued to produce in rapid succession a number of fresh, lively and fascinating stories which are to be found in every circulating library in the kingdom, as also in the Tauchnitz edition.

"Mrs. Geoffrey," "Portia," "Rosemoyne," "Nora Creina," "Airy Fairy Lilian," are among her earlier efforts, but there has been no break in the series; "A Life's Remorse," "Nor Wife Nor Maid"—two thrilling and dramatic works—"A Born Coquette," "Undercurrents," "Lady Patty"—a clever society sketch—"The Professor's Experiment," and many other novels—in all about forty—together with innumerable short stories, have emanated from her everready pen. She lived to see published a late book, a collection of sparkling, clever tales, under the title of "An Anxious Moment," of which the final chapter, "How I write my novels," reads with touching significance, as though in describing her method of work, she were leav-

ing a last legacy to the readers who loved her so well. She had written yet two more books, entitled "The Coming of Chloe," and "Lovice," which will shortly be issued.

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Originally descended from a distinguished old Scottish family, Mrs. Hungerford's forbears had come over from Scotland to Ireland in the reign of James I. She was the grand-daughter of John Hamilton, of Vesington, Dunboyne—a property some twelve miles out of Dublin—and the daughter of the late Rev. Canon Hamilton, Rector and Vicar Choral of St. Faughnan's Cathedral, one of the oldest churches in Ireland. Left, when scarcely of full age, a young widow with three infant daughters, she married again in 1882, Mr. Thomas Henry Hungerford, whose father's estate, Cahirmore, lies about twenty miles west of his now widowed home, St. Brenda's, Bandon, Co. Cork, where are left three more motherless little ones, two boys and a girl.

And now the joyous, useful and active life is untimely cut off, while yet in the glad summer of her days and in the zenith of her fame. Universally beloved and mourned, she has passed to the Great Beyond "Until the day break and the shadows flee away."

## Englishwomen in Modern Literature.

### By A. CLARKE WHITE.

One can hardly fail to notice, in making any record of the women writers of our day, how marked a contrast exists between the first fifty years and the latter half of the present century. The former period produced few of any merit, if we except one or two charming story and song writers, whose work was as much ahead of their times as they were themselves intellectually; while, dating from 1850 onwards, our literature has been enriched by the genius of George Eliot, the Brontës and Mrs. Gaskell, to say nothing of the novelists of our own day. In every art there are those who are "born too soon," and for this offence it has been observed that they rarely escape punishment by Fate, to whom opposition, voluntary or involuntary, to the general order of things, is resented, generally by failure, sometimes by a fame that is the reverse of glorious.

When it is remembered that no day schools for girls existed in England till about 1843, and that, while the education of boys was provided for in foundations, grammar schools, universities and the like, that of their sisters was confined exclusively to what could be taught at home, either by mother or governess (the latter only competent to impart a smattering of accomplishments more or less useless for everyday life) such a state of intellectual dryness is not so remarkable as it at first appears. It was considered "vulgar" for a woman to invade the territory occupied by the other sex, and a "blue stocking" was an abomination to all well regulated minds, male or female.

"Attention through the day her duties claimed, And to be useful as resigned she aimed."

In the face of so much opposition it is scarcely surprising that most women should submit to mute inglorious silence, even supposing that they entertained any aspirations towards the Muses. It would be a courageous woman indeed who would face the disapproval and hostility of her friends, as well as the satire and ridicule of the world in general, to follow the thorny path of literature in the early part of the century. The few who did so were women whose position enabled them to ignore the world's ridicule or blame. Fanny Burney, who was in Queen Charlotte's court, attained popularity rather from the lively descriptions of the persons and manners of her times than from any special literary merit in her novels. Jane Austen, who followed her, has a brilliant, satirical wit, and her characters are life-like at a time when it was unfashionable to be natural. No other names stand out from the rank and file for a period of thirty or forty years subsequently, and, knowing what English society and English tastes were in the early Victorian years, we are hardly surprised at the dearth of women writers; the soil was barren that should have produced them, for when the average young woman is trained in the belief that a seventeen-inch waist, sloping shoulders and hair neatly plastered over the ears, are more pleasing in the eyes of men than an intelligent acquaintance with her language and its literature, we must admit, even if we deplore, that there was small incentive towards the cultivation of genius.

There are, however, one or two to whom no stimulus other than the natural spur of genius was needed. Of these the names of Harriet Martineau, the Brontës and Mary Somerville serve to show how widely varied a woman's genius can be—as varied and ubiquitous as a man's.

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Each one of this triad was, as it were, a forerunner and herald of the new and good time coming for women. The favouring auspices of the latter half of the century, following on the foundation in 1848 of Queen's College, and a few years later of Bedford College for Women, broke the spell that had so long kept them mere domestic automatons and aroused in the feminine heart a spirit of emulation which has led them on to high and ever higher achievements. A girl is no longer handicapped by social prejudices, nor laughed at for her presumption in attempting to tread in man's footsteps. On the contrary, she is, to a great extent, accorded the same educational privileges as her brothers. She may begin at a High School, go through a course of lectures and examinations of appalling stiffness, and finish her curriculum at Girton or Newnham, whence she may bear away the blushing honours of a B.A. or even an M.A. degree. And so the old order changeth, ever making way for the new!

Very naturally, as it seems, the increasing intellectual power of women is most apparent in the realm of fiction, which, as good old Izaak Walton said of fishing, is "a gentle craft," and one in which she well holds her own. Given the necessary mental culture, originality and ability to express thoughts and ideas lucidly, there is nothing unfeminine or "strong minded" in the occupation. It is one that may be followed at home in the most cloistral seclusion—provided the lady-writer is not a journalist or a critic—and there is very little doubt that the influence of literary work upon its devotees is stimulating and elevating. Who that has met authors of any reputation has not been impressed by the wit, the sparkle and the interest of their conversation? If this is so in the case of men, it is still more marked in women, who unite to these qualities the rarer gifts—savoir-vivre and tact.

Romance is an integral part of woman's nature, from the time when a doll is the recipient of all the embryonic feminine instincts of love and maternity, to the period when she awakes to the reality of passion and that hero-worship of which romance is born. Romance writing comes almost naturally to a woman; a hero and a heroine; love-happy or the reverse, and a plot woven of the fortunes of the lovers through many chapters of vicissitude and adversity to a final chime of wedding bells, is a first principle to the feminine mind, and this enlarged, varied by complex motives, periods and individualities of style, is the groundwork of a woman's novel. Someone has said that the best

book ever written would not make up to a man for the loss of his daily paper, but the converse only is true of woman; if she can have romance she will even dispense with the "Telegraph."

Seeing then that the romantic enters so largely into her nature, it is rather surprising that women-poets are so rare. Of notable mark there are none, unless we except Mrs. Browning and George Eliot. Our grandmothers read Mrs. Hemans, Eliza Cooke, "L. E. L." and the like—"pretty little poems," says Stopford Brooke, "having no inward fire, no idea, no marked character. They might be written by any versifier at any time, and express pleasant indifferent thought in pleasant verse." To the modern criticism these ladies seemed to have enjoyed an easily earned reputation. It has been said that they were good enough for their time, but this appears a rather unjust judgment of work that was always conscientious, and often charming. To attain to any eminence in poetry requires, it would seem, a wider grasp of the philosophy of life than women, as yet, are able to bring to the subject. A comprehensive, keen-sighted view of its joys and tragedies. together with perfect responsiveness to its many calls, is an absolute necessity to the true poet. Women, without doubt, possess the latter gift very largely, but they lack the intellectual traditions, the rich store of inherited brain power that is almost a man's birthright. Many generations must vet pass before this stultification of her mental faculties is outgrown, and, as Dr. Johnson ungraciously said of the lady orator, the wonder is, knowing the thousand deterrent influences against which she has had to contend, not that she should write poor poetry, but that she should write it at all.

Poor, however, is not the word to apply to either Mrs. Browning or George Eliot. Professor Craik, who is certainly a judicious critic, has said of Mrs. Browning that "the only real poets the age can boast of are Tennyson, Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett Browning." This is high praise, for though in some respects her work might be bracketted with that of the other two poets, it is, so far as fulness and lyrical sweetness go, far behind Tennyson, while it equally lacks the breadth and bold originality that characterise her husband's work. The portrait of Marian Erle is one of the best passages, perhaps, in her fine poem of "Aurora Leigh," a poem which will always have a place among our classics, both for its beauty of form and the many touches of genius it contains.

George Eliot's claims as a poetess find, perhaps, fewer advocates,

but she, of all women writers, has a peculiarly masculine grasp of idea and treats with virile power such subjects as "A College Breakfast Party," "A Minor Prophet," &c. It would be impossible to cavil, however, at the tender simplicity of her lyrics, such for instance as "Sweet evenings come and go, love," nor with the fervour and thrill that grows as one reads "O, may I join the choir invisible," the concluding lines of which are so significant of a noble woman's aspirations that we may be pardoned for quoting them.

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"May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense:
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world."

There are so few other women poets of any distinction that only a brief mention of them here is necessary. Christina Rosetti, who had a delicate mystical touch; Francis Ridley Havergal, famous in the religious world, and Adelaide Proctor, a lyric writer of some ability, are all that will occur to the reader as worthy of any claim to the title.

But if, among those who wear the laurel, women must be contented for the present with a lower place, she need not be satisfied with any but a front rank in fiction, for in this branch of literature she is man's rival, and presses him hard in the race. The readiness with which women avail themselves of any opportunity in which their talents or their versatility may find congenial openings, is nowhere more seen than in this direction. Here, as before observed, all her romantic tendencies have a free hand and full play, and she can follow her imagination whithersoever it leads. Culture, which, since it has been more readily placed within her reach, has done so much for her, has here found a most congenial soil, and has taken deep and lasting root. In other branches of literature,—for instance the metaphysical, theological and philosophic -she has not, so far, been allowed a fair and equal competition with men, access to the founts of such knowledge having been, till quite recently, denied to her. How far she might have ventured, and to what extent her new found energy would have carried her in these paths, we can only surmise by the enthusiasm with which she has entered on those from which the barriers have been removed.

A favourite imputation brought against woman is her conservatism. This, surely, is fallacious, for even the least observant of her critics do not fail to charge her at the same time with variableness and love of change. It is obvious that one of these statements must be incorrect, and-so far at least as art is concerned-we are glad to think that she is impressionable, and therefore receptive, ergo, in this respect anything but Conservative. On the contrary, women, generally speaking, show decided leanings to the opposition. In her home life, she may, to a certain extent, mould her surroundings according to tradition, but even then she is not slow to think for herself in the matter of régime and management, and a mother of to-day acts on very different lines from those that regulated life for her great-grandmother at the beginning of the century. So, in her readiness to adopt new spheres of activity and what are called "advanced" views of life, her attitude is distinctly progressive. The modern woman by no means considers work, either in its active forms of teaching, nursing, and the like, or the more passive ones of authorship and journalism, as derogatory, although the well-regulated young woman of fifty or sixty years ago would have condemned it as "shocking." When the door to freedom was unbarred she did not hug her fetters, preferring servitude, but went out into the new light and life-to liberty. If the light was at first dazzling, the air intoxicating, and liberty too often a luring will-o'-the-wisp that led to disappointment, there was that in her nature which steadied, guided, and taught endurance—a springing well of energy and hope, that would not be discouraged, and that no difficulties or obstacles had power to baffle. The sterner fibre of which man is made is not wanting in woman, for it is notorious that she will bear unmurmuringly both physical and mental trials that break down masculine fortitude. Pluck has always been accounted a specially English virtue, and the English soldier never knows when he is beaten. It is only true to say also of an Englishwoman that she never knows when to "give in," Once the educational barrier removed, women availed themselves in eager, ever-increasing numbers of the privileges hitherto so grudgingly withheld, and the modern girl has often a wider curriculum of study than her brothers. Embarked on a career, whether it takes her from home or can be pursued under its protecters

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ing shelter, she brings all her energy and enthusiasm to bear on her work, and, in spite (alas, too often!) of defective physique and constitutional disabilities, goes indomitably on to the end she has in view. Failures there are of course, and sadly clouded endings to promising careers, but these are nearly always due to a break-down of health, for in her newly found energy she has not yet acquired the wisdom of husbanding her resources. "It is better to wear out than rust out," she will say in reply to a friendly remonstrance, and only when the much-tried brain and overworked body rebel, will she reluctantly admit to herself that there is such a thing as excess of zeal.

The time will come, however, when the first exuberance of this new enthusiasm will tone down to a soberer view of life, and women will wake to the expediency of discretion in work as well as in pleasure, added to the primal lesson of life that you cannot eat your cake and have it, but it must not be overlooked that self-sacrifice and renunciation are essentially feminine traits. Therefore we see this contradiction of the sexes, that a man will leave his business behind with the closing of the office door, and go lightly off to his club or a theatre, but a woman goes home from a day's work at teaching, art schools, music, or the drudgery of clerkship work. to take up another task-study for an examination, typewriting, or literary work of some kind. Even if she does none of these, there is always the never-failing needlework and home duties, which are superadded to a business woman's time and patience. Life is still hard for women in spite of the ameliorations these latter days have brought to her lot: hard, that is, in the strenuousness of the daily toil, which often equals man's in its responsibility, while it lacks the compensation of equality in remuneration, position and preferment.

None of these things, happily, affect her in the open field of literature, where there is no more favour for man than for woman, and where the prizes are within reach of both—as with equal justice are also the blanks in the lottery. She is even more at home here than in music or painting, for, except as a reproducer, few women are specially gifted with artistic genius; she is a far better exponent of music than a composer, and rises to no distinction as an artist in painting or sculpture, while her histrionic power is in marked contrast to her want of skill as a playwright. It seems, up to the present time, therefore, superfluous to deny that women are imitators rather

than originators, and it is no aspersion on the sex to say so. But, after all, imitation is only the first step in progress. The child imitates all it'sees and hears till it is old enough to think for itself; then, although the imitative faculty does not disappear, it becomes modified by varied influences and surroundings, and, when there is any mental ability, it developes into originality and inventiveness. This is but the first and imitative stage in woman's mental development, though there are many signs that the second and creative is not far off. "So much," as a learned Oxford professor lately said, " is put into women's heads that surely something must come out!" This may be sarcastic on the part of the professor, but there is no denying the logic of the statement. Much has been put into their heads in the way of a wide and varied education, and we have a right to look for rich results as the outcome of all this training. In one direction they are already evident, and, as has been said before, only time is needed for them to be equally apparent in others.

When Charlotte Brontë and her sisters, that "weird family," wrote their wonderful epoch-making stories in the remote Yorkshire parsonage, their work was done almost by stealth, and under discouragements that would have effectually disheartened any less gifted writers. But, like George Eliot, their genius was too great for failure, and difficulties only increased their ardour. We know how Charlotte tried publisher after publisher with "Jane Eyre" till it was accepted by Smith, Elder and Co., and we know that this is only one of numerous parallel cases. There is no royal road to success in any branch of work, and though some few have greatness thrust upon them, the majority only achieved it by patient, dogged perseverance, and in this, women often set an example to men. George Eliot's success came after many years of waiting; Jane Austen, Mrs. Gaskell, Miss Braddon, Mrs. Henry Wood, and others, only came to the front slowly, and it has been left to one or two privileged favourites of fortune, like Olive Schreiner and Marie Corelli, to attain an early and general popularity. The cause of this capriciousness in the reading public is difficult to determine, if it be not, as the unsuccessful sarcastically assert, in the amount of advertising a popular book receives in its early career. is hardly exaggeration to say that advertisement is the mother of success in the literary as well as in the commercial world, and a book that is unheralded remains unhonoured and unsung, generally finding an early resting place on the back shelves of bookstalls and lendinglut.

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libraries-if it ever gets there. But an equally important factor in success is a good publisher. The names of certain firms bear an authority that is almost undisputed, and the works issued from their press are generally received with respect, although, it is on record, that the best publishers have occasionally been known to issue a dull book, that not even the credit of their name sufficed to provide with a circulation. Even a good publisher and "bold advertisement" does not always keep a book from falling flat, as many an author of more than average merit has sometimes found to his cost. A special "boom" will bring notoriety to a mediocre work, while a beautiful poem, a clever novel, or a painstaking scientific treatise will fail to hit the mark, because the time is not ripe for their appearance, or the public attention is occupied with a Parliamentary election or a more or less important crisis in South Africa. How to seize the right moment for publication is difficult to define; and, after all, the matter is usually left to the publisher, who presumably knows the market best, and the time and season for producing a work. No one who knew his trade would issue, for instance, ghost stories in summer time, or manuals of field sports at Christmas. It may be safely asserted, therefore, that the best introduction to a book is a good publishing firm, and it is pleasant to see that most of our modern authoresses have secured this advantage for their works.

It would be almost impossible to touch on all the talented women who have contributed to our modern literature; many are in the front rank as novelists, and an ever-increasing number are making names for themselves as editors and journalists. The light and bright touch of a woman's hand is seen to advantage in the sketchy articles so much affected in newspapers of to-day, and her ready wit is never at a loss for a subject that is neither heavy nor dull.

The discursiveness with which women are credited conversationally is happily banished from their writings. It exists perhaps in a few instances, but to no marked extent, and most certainly not more than in contemporary writers of the male sex. For example, masterly as the book is, and absorbing in interest, it cannot be denied that Zangwill's novel, "The Master," is singularly discursive in parts, and markedly so at the end of the story; while the only woman writer whose work can be accused of the same fault is Mrs. Humphrey Ward, who is somewhat diffuse in "David Grieve." However, even discursiveness is not always unpardonable, and we can forgive it when

the interest of the story does not seriously suffer, as it certainly does not in either of the books mentioned: in hands of less ability it is quite conceivable that the philosophising of the one, and the speculative analysis of the other, might not only bore the reader but seriously mar the success of the book. On the other hand, it is questionable whether the popular taste for the frothy and flippant, the shallow and specious, should find encouragement from authors who "write down" to their public. We are fond of talking about the "refining" influence of literature, but when we glance over some of the specimens displayed on bookstalls, let us say (the effusions of women-writers as well as men), it is hard to imagine what benefit anyone can derive from their silly vulgarity. And here, be it remarked, one cannot fail to wonder as to what may be considered fit and proper reading and what may not. It is useless to say it is a matter of opinion, and that each one is free to read what he or she pleases. On the contrary it is a matter of the bookstall owner's opinion, and if he disapproves of any writer the works of that unfortunate author or authoress will find no place on his boards. Of course a bookseller is untroubled by prejudices of this sort, or we should be in a parlous state indeed, and our mental pabulum might become seriously limited. Refinement does not necessarily mean priggishness any more than it means dullness, and in proof we need only mention the delightfully simple stories of Mary E. Wilkins, the clever American authoress, or, a mong our own countrywomen, Mrs. Gaskell and Miss Thackeray. There is no question as to the charm, simplicity and delicate humour of Mrs. Gaskell's writings, nor of Miss Thackeray's refined imaginativeness, in whose work there is an oldworld aroma as of lavender and rose-leaves. Only genius can so handle homely subjects as to transmute them into the gold of romance. There is nothing more simple or more everyday in character than "Cranford" life, for instance, where the most stirring event for years is a conjuror's visit; yet, if Mrs. Gaskell only "chronicles small beer" she does so in such an inimitable and fascinating manner that one falls in love with Miss Matty straight away, and stands in awe of Miss Jemima from the very beginning as though they were very flesh and blood.

For freshness, too, and English that is as pure as it is often poetical, Miss Thackeray's "Old Kensington" is unrivalled. Her word painting is so descriptive that, once read, who can forget the picture of the old es

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house with its ivy-grown walls; the ancient elms with their cawing rooks; the plashing dilapidated fountain, and the lilacs drooping round it in the long rank grass. The red, windy sunsets Dolly saw from her window through the bare tracery of trees in winter, and the rich luxuriance and scented air that filled the wild overgrown garden in summer. One owes a lasting debt of gratitude to a writer who can give us word pictures such as these. Descriptive writing of real merit is not very common in women, even our best rather suggest than paint, and the "bright, particular star" George Eliot, had the gift but slightly developed. Present day writers, if we except Mrs. Humphrey Ward, who describes scenery very naturally and charmingly, have hardly a trace of it.

The study and analysis of character, together with the depicting of various types of society and individuals, seems to be a faculty shared equally by men and women. It is an art that reached its high-water mark in Thackeray and George Eliot, for Hardy, faithful portrayer as he is of the passions that sway human life, seems to see only the sad and sombre, and is but a poor delineator of the average and ordinary, and is entirely lacking in humour.

George Eliot's horizon was wider. She could give us a Mrs. Poyser as well as a Romola; an Aunt Glegg and a Silas Marner, and her treatment of one is as perfect as the other. Commonplace life and commonplace people were not beneath the dignity of her pen; she does not attempt to idealise them, but represents them to us as worthy of a place in fiction.

"It is a sordid life, you say, this of the Tullivers and Dodsons, irradiated by no sublime principles, no romantic visions, no active, self-renourcing faith; moved by none of those wild, uncontrollable passions which make the dark shadows of misery and crime . . . we need not shrink from this comparison of small things with great; for does not science tell us that its highest striving is after the ascertainment of a unity which shall bind the smallest things with the greatest. It is surely the same with the observation of human life."

Few women have the gift of depicting tragedy with such a sense of reality as George Eliot; but it surprised the world and the critics one day in the unknown work of an unknown woman, a young girl, indeed, when there appeared "The Story of an African Farm." If there is any crudity about the work it is in form only, and in an occasional abruptness of language. Thought, insight, and passionate

intensity are there, so that we are blind to defects which, after all, only serve to heighten the remarkable talent displayed from the first to the last page. Here is living, throbbing, passionate life, hemmed in by the very narrowest, meanest conditions; characters sordid, sublime, despicable, vulgar, all met with in one small African farm on the confines of civilization; all intensely interesting because so life-like. One may never have met a Taut Sannie or a Bonaparte Smith, but we know and recognise the type, and our impulse is so strong to spurn the selfish impostor, that it even becomes a consolation to know that he is only a brain figment. The complex character of Lyndall is less attractive than it should be, though one is in sympathy with her rebellion against a society that decrees such a wide difference between what is right for man and woman. In a characteristic speech she says—

"We stand here at this gate this morning, both poor, both young, both friendless; there is not much to choose between us. Let us turn away just as we are, to make our way in life. This evening you will come to a farmer's house. The farmer, albeit you come alone and on foot, will give you a pipe of tobacco and a cup of coffee and a bed. If he has no dam to build, and no child to teach, to-morrow you can go on your way with a friendly greeting of the hand. I, if I come to the same place to-night, will have strange questions asked me, strange glances cast on me. The Boer-wife will shake her head and give me food to eat with the Kaffirs, and a right to sleep with the dogs. That would be the first step in our progress, a very little one, but every step to the end would repeat it. We were equals once when we lay new-born babes on our nurses knee. We will be equals again when they tie up our jaws for the last sleep."

The poetic faculty is not wanting in "Dreams," or perhaps it would be better to say that a pretty sentiment is here clothed in poetic language. Allegories are risky things to handle, and a little of them goes a long way. As a rule they are far-fetched and cloudily interpreted, and few there be who find the clue to a solution. Olive Schriener yearns much in this volume, but one might venture to say that if she had not previously written "The Story of an African Farm" we should probably not have seen "Dreams."

A certain school has arisen within the last decade or so, whose principal feminine exponents are Edna Lyall, Mrs. Humphrey Ward, and, quite recently, Marie Corelli. Their tendency is best expressed by the term quasi-religious, as opposed to those distinctly religious

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stories by writers such as Sarah Fraser-Tytler, Mrs Craik, Miss Worboise, &c. The dictum that demand creates supply is less fallacious than most proverbial assertions, and it is a rather remarkable sign of the times that the religious novel—pure and simple—is giving place to the quasi-religious. The world, the flesh, and the devil are a combination no longer needing a special clause in the catechism, but a triad resembling an algebraical problem—each requiring the other for its perfect explanation—take away one and the others are nullified. These writers offer us their theology in the disguise of a novel. Now we know that orthodoxy and heterodoxy are interchangeable terms. "Orthodoxy is my doxy, heterodoxy is the other man's doxy," has been ably said, so that after all the effort of the quasi-religious novelist is abortive, for in the land of two hundred and ninety odd sects, it is evident that an author can only secure the adhesion of a limited minority. Of the three writers we have mentioned two are sufficiently vague in setting forth their views to avoid, either wittingly or unwittingly, the pitfalls into which plainer speech would have led them, while the third wages undisguised war against Freethought. Marie Corelli is essentially "mystic," and Mrs. Ward is scarcely theological.

When Mrs. Ward wrote "Robert Ellesmere," great was the discussion as to the advisability of publishing novels with an "upsetting" tendency. Critics were at variance, newspaper columns were invaded by correspondents who took kaleidoscopic views of the matter, and it was not possible anywhere, where two or three were gathered together, to avoid the inevitable argument. It was left unsettled and remains unsettled, and although Mrs. Ward, only a year or two after published, "The History of David Grieve," a book with tendencies quite as "upsetting," though not so immediately apparent as in "Robert Ellesmere," oddly enough little was said of her heterodoxy by press or public, though more than one complained of David's priggishness and the heavy tone of the story. Perhaps less would have been said in the other case, had not Mrs. Ward unfortunately made a clergyman the backslider, and had she not shown us, step by step, the workings of insidious doubt in the clerical mind, ending finally in the triumph of a sort of Deistic compromise between unbelief and faith. In "David Grieve" there is but a vague surmising, a sort of inculcation of first principles, that seems expressed in the quoted passage from David's diary.

"Probably the two worlds" (the public and the clergy) "have their analogies in every religion; and what the individual has to learn in these days at once of outward debate and of unifying social aspiration, is to dissent no longer with the heat of a narrow antipathy, but with the quiet of a large sympathy."

Setting aside controversialism, there is much to admire in Mrs. Ward's books. She has a fine command of language, is well and deeply read, and has, more than most women, a certain capacity for theological argument.

Such a brief outline as this necessarily is, can only touch the mere skirts of the subject, and many clever and popular women writers must perforce remain unmentioned. It is to be hoped that enough has been said to prove that a firm foothold has been taken by woman in the literary world, and one that she is likely to keep and strengthen as time passes. The future is bright for her in many directions, and assuredly this of literature is one of the most promising. Compared with her forerunners what marvellous gifts of education, training, and influence are hers. Day by day her advance is sure and continued; year by year finds her with more privileges gained. With increasing knowledge comes increasing light—and that, as Matthew Arnold says, is the concomitant of sweetness. In the broader, purer atmosphere of high intelligence and culture, what is there of which our sisters will not be capable? Not the rivals of men, but with them "nobly mated," each working for mutual good.

# The Awakening of Barbara Dusent:

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OR, A CHILD OF THE MOORS.

### By S. PENDLETON.

#### CHAPTER I.

A SLEEPING SOUL.

"I SAY, Philip, do you think Mrs. Ferrard would have any objection to my painting Miss Dusent?"

"No, I shouldn't imagine so," his friend returned. "I suppose you would want to depict Barbara as a moorland beauty or something of that kind," laughingly. "I thought last night that the name Alice had bestowed upon her appeared rather to impress you."

"Yes, a child of the moors," Gerard Selwyn repeated musingly. "It is certainly the character I should choose to represent her."

"You've never heard her sing, have you? She is too shy to perform before people. Besides, she has a craze for studying, and generally devotes the evening hours to her books. A little more training and her voice will be glorious. Get her to talk to you about her beloved moors, Selwyn, the subject has positively a transforming effect upon her. Here she comes," he added.

The two young men stood still to watch a little party advancing slowly up the winding walk of the well-kept garden. The distinguishing figure of the group was a tall, slim girl, who held herself with a certain inborn interesting grace. Two small boys were clinging to her hands, whilst behind walked an elderly lady with two little girls.

"Your sister is not with them," Gerard Selwyn observed.

"No, indeed!" Philip Ferrard returned. "Alice makes the most of her newly acquired liberty, and eschews almost entirely the society of her small brothers and sisters. The children adore Barbara."

The intense gravity of the girl's face was broken by a faint smile as she approached the young men.

Her cousin laid a detaining hand upon her, while the governess and her charges passed into the house.

"Never mind the small fry, Barbara; come along, Mr. Selwyn

has promised to exhibit his sketches this afternoon. I know you will enjoy looking at them," Philip said. His pride in his friend's work was great.

"Mother and Alice haven't got back from Hardcastle's yet," he added as they went indoors.

Barbara Dusent regarded Mr. Selwyn with a certain amount of awe; she would gladly have foregone the proposed treat in order to avoid his society. But Philip was persistent, and in spite of her whispered refusal, led her past the schoolroom door to the room beyond, which had been temporarily fitted up as a studio for Mr. Selwyn. Barbara paused a moment before the newly begun portrait of Mrs. Ferrard, which stood upon an easel.

"You mustn't pronounce upon that until it has had a few days' work, Miss Dusent," Mr. Selwyn remarked, with a smile as he stood beside her.

"What a noise those children make," Philip said. Noticing that the door of communication between the rooms was open, he hastily closed it, adding a warning to them to stay in their own quarters.

"Now then, Selwyn," he cried. "Look here, Barbara."

A low exclamation of delight broke from the girl's lips, when Gerard Selwyn placed in her hands a dainty portrayal of a moorland sunset.

"How very beautiful," she murmured. "It is almost like a bit of Harborough, only," lifting her frank eyes to the artist's face, "this moor is more perfect than Harborough, that is, wilder and more rugged."

Selwyn bit his lips. The sketch had been painted during the spring, when he had spent a fortnight within sight of the moors upon which Barbara Dusent lavished the devotion of an enthusiast. Barbara had unconsciously laid bare the weakness of his work.

Philip, busily turning over the contents of a portfolio, did not notice his friend's discomfiture. The sketch was hastily put away before the name scrawled on the back had caught Barbara's eye. Selwyn did not bring forth any other delineation of Harborough. He contented himself with showing his youthful critic the beauties of a picturesque village, with whose charms he was totally unacquainted. As he was replacing the last of these, the door opened and a tall fair-haired girl entered. Selwyn dropped the portfolio and advanced to meet her. "We have been endeavouring to wile

away one dreary half-hour of your absence by turning over my sketches," he informed her, in low tones.

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"How could you absent yourself for three whole hours, Miss Ferrard?" he asked reproachfully.

"Is it so long?" Alice Ferrard returned, with eyebrows prettily lifted.

"Oh, Mr. Selwyn," the next moment, "don't allow mamma to make any alteration in the dress she is wearing for her portrait. Mrs. Hardcastle has almost talked her into doing so."

"Certainly I will not," he replied promptly. "Besides, the idea was yours, therefore," with emphasis, "nothing would induce me to accept any change."

"If my daughter has won you over to her side, I'm afraid I shall be powerless to move you, Mr. Selwyn," a laughing voice broke in.

Gerard Selwyn turned quickly; Mrs. Ferrard stood at his elbow.

"You are quite right," he returned, gaily. "Besides," in graver tones, "nothing could possibly suit you better than this, Mrs. Ferrard," pointing to the gown faintly indicated upon the canvas.

With a satisfied glance at her pictured charms, Mrs. Ferrard moved towards the table where her son and her niece were still absorbed in the contemplation of Mr. Selwyn's sketches.

"How long will it take you to paint mamma's portrait?" Alice asked.

"I don't quite know. I hope you are not in a hurry to get rid of me, Miss Ferrard," Mr. Selwyn laughingly retorted, "for I have not the smallest intention of scamping my work. I have only been at Wayflete two days," he added, in tones that were tenderly reproachful.

"Time goes very slowly sometimes," she returned in a bantering tone.

"It does," he cried promptly, "I can testify to the truth of that from my own experience this afternoon."

Before Alice had time to frame a suitable reply the dressing-bell rang, and she slipped away, a ripple of amusement on her lips.

"I hope the noise of the little ones does not disturb you, Mr. Selwyn?" Mrs. Ferrard observed next morning, when the artist was working at her portrait.

"Not in the least," he replied, "I like to hear them. They appear extremely fond of their cousin, Miss Dusent," he added, glad

to have an opportunity of introducing the name of the girl who was exercising his thoughts.

"Of Barbara? oh yes. She is quite devoted to them. Some girls of her age would not be sensible enough to see the wisdom of the seclusion which my niece appears to enjoy. Poor child, she had a dreary existence until she came to us a year ago. Mr. Trevor, her guardian, is comparatively a young man, with a passion for exploring strange quarters of the globe. Upon Barbara becoming his ward, he handed her over to the care of his sister, an elderly and eccentric spinster. Miss Trevor appeared to consider that she was peculiarly fitted to educate Barbara, and, in spite of her brother's feeble protests, she insisted upon undertaking the task. Consequently the poor girl had her head crammed with all sorts of odd theories, and was taught everything that was antiquated and out of date. Barbara feels her deficiencies keenly. Fortunately she is remarkably quick, and most anxious to make up for lost time. Miss Manvers reports her to be making rapid progress."

"I understand Mr. Trevor is in Africa at present. When he arrives in England, he wishes Barbara to return to Harborough. However, I hope to induce him to allow her to remain with us. I consider it cruel to keep a girl immured in such intense solitude."

"Harborough is an awfully weird spot," Selwyn remarked, as he bent a critical gaze upon his work. "Is it not? I don't know how Miss Trevor supports existence there."

"Barbara professes to like those surroundings. But I'm inclined to think she is already transferring her attachment from Harborough to Wayflete."

"I think the name you have given your cousin is a singularly appropriate one, Miss Ferrard," Mr. Selwyn observed, turning to Alice, who, seated by the window engaged upon some elaborate embroidery, had taken no part in the foregoing conversation.

"It was when she first came to us," Alice responded brightly. "But Barbara has already lost much of her quaintness—sometimes it was too delicious. Don't you think she would make a good subject for a picture, Mr. Selwyn?"

"No doubt," he returned, with assumed carelessness.

"Paint her and let it be the picture of the year," Alice suggested playfully.

"Perhaps she would object to sit for me," he answered in the same light vein.

"I don't think she would refuse if I were to ask her," Alice rejoined. "Barbara is very good-natured. What do you think of the project, mamma?"

"I am afraid Barbara will not be willing to sacrifice so large a portion of her time," Mrs. Ferrard replied cautiously.

"I shall not be exacting in that respect," Gerard Selwyn urged, "two or three sittings will quite suit my purpose."

"Barbara is going past the window now, I will fetch her, then we shall hear what the person principally concerned has to say in the matter," and Alice left the room with swift steps.

Barbara looked slightly bewildered when she appeared in the wake of her impetuous cousin a few minutes later. She glanced inquiringly from her aunt to Mr. Selwyn.

Mrs. Ferrard took upon herself to explain.

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"Mr. Selwyn would like you to sit to him for a picture he is contemplating, that is all, Barbara. Are you willing, dear? Of course it shall be just as you wish."

"Do, Barbara," Alice pleaded, "then when the picture is viewed by admiring crowds we can go and criticise it also."

"Miss Dusent, won't you consent to make your cousin's charming plan a possibility?" Mr. Selwyn asked, laying down his brush.

"Yes, if you wish it," Barbara agreed slowly. Too shy to refuse, she was yet completely in the dark as to why the artist could possibly desire to paint her, for Barbara Dusent was utterly unconscious of her own rare picturesque beauty.

"Alice, whatever were you thinking of to put such an idea into Gerard Selwyn's head?" Mrs. Ferrard asked when they were alone. "Now Barbara and he will be constantly thrown together, a catastrophe I was most anxious to avoid."

"Why, mamma," Alice returned amazedly, "don't you think intercourse with a man like Gerard Selwyn will be decidedly beneficial to Barbara? She is quite morbidly shy at times."

"Possibly," Mrs. Ferrard rejoined drily. "But as you are not actually engaged to Gerard Selwyn, it would have been an act of wisdom had you endeavoured to keep them apart until after that desirable consummation. He is just the man to find a girl like Barbara Dusent wonderfully attractive. My brother's wife was the

most beautiful woman I ever came across, Alice; and Barbara will soon be her exact image. She has, too, a latent power of fascination which her mother did not possess. I think you have acted very foolishly. You forget that Barbara is quite an heiress, while you are almost portionless. Although Gerard Selwyn is possessed of abundant means, he has expensive habits, and not the least factor in his possible admiration for your cousin, will be the knowledge of the wealth of which she will shortly become mistress."

"It is too late to make any objection now," Alice rejoined coldly. "Besides, I thought you imagined that Mr. Trevor was in love with Barbara."

"Yes, of that fact I am quite certain. But still it is useless to take his prospects into consideration now. At the present moment he is leagues away. Given a fascinating man like Mr. Selwyn, and an impressionable girl of Barbara's stamp, the result of an intimacy between the pair is easy to foresee."

"I feel quite certain that such an idea will never enter Barbara's head. Mr. Selwyn regards her with the same amount of interest as Sophy and Ethel. I heard him telling Philip yesterday that Miss Dusent was a charmingly quaint child." And Alice left the room with an annoyed countenance.

Next morning, when Barbara was knitting her brows over a difficult page of translation, Alice claimed the fulfilment of the promise she had made to Mr. Selwyn.

Barbara followed somewhat unwillingly into the next room, where the artist was diligently painting Mrs. Ferrard's portrait.

"Oh, Barbara, are you coming to take my place?" her aunt observed. "I shall be glad to be released. You will find it a very troublesome business to maintain one attitude for any length of time. I get dreadfully weary. Now, Mr. Selwyn, you must really allow me to depart, there has been somebody waiting to speak to me for the last fifteen minutes."

"Just one moment," he said eagerly.

"Don't keep Barbara too long," Mrs. Ferrard enjoined as she at last hurried away.

"I am afraid you are prepared to regard me as something of an ogre, Miss Dusent," the artist observed pleasantly, noticing Barbara's anxious glance as he approached her and placed a chair. "There is really nothing to be afraid of," he added with a reassuring smile. He

made no attempt to pose her, a hasty sketch of her head being all he desired that morning.

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Alice chatted ceaselessly during the half hour he spent over it. More than once she glanced from the artist to his sitter. In Barbara's face she read nothing, save a nervousness which made her whole attitude and manner constrained. But Alice could not help thinking that Gerard Selwyn's countenance expressed deeper feeling than the ordinary interest and absorption his work usually brought him.

#### CHAPTER II.

UNDER FALSE COLOURS.

Two days later, when Barbara entered the studio, she uttered an exclamation of delight at the sight of a large basket of heather which Mr. Selwyn appeared to be arranging. "You will not object to wearing some of this, I hope," he said turning to her. "Miss Ferrard will be here in a moment, she has just been called away. As I have had strict orders not to keep you above half an hour, I think we had better set to work at once."

Silently he posed her, arranging in the dusky coils of her hair, and on her dress, masses of purple heather. "Please tell me at once when you feel tired," he said, as he at last withdrew to his easel.

The days fled rapidly by. The one or two sittings Mr. Selwyn had at first asked for lengthened out into an indefinite number. The painter was burning with enthusiasm over his work. And as by this time, his engagement to Alice Ferrard had grown to be almost an accomplished fact, Mrs. Ferrard placed no embargo upon the sittings. But Barbara knew nothing of this, for Gerard Selwyn wished the engagement to remain for a time a secret; consequently the unconscious girl held daily intercourse with the man, whose commonplace nature was gaining power to quicken her whole being into life.

Slowly, but surely, Gerard Selwyn was arousing Barbara Dusent's slumbering soul. And with skilful, beautiful touches, he was transferring its dawn, stirring in her face, to his canvas. The two were seldom alone together, but Selwyn made the most of those moments, for no man was better versed than he in the art of kindling in a maiden's mind that passion called love,

He had completely fathomed his sitter's nature, and understood how to make her responsive to his slightest word, his lightest look. Selwyn was not in love with Barbara Dusent; but when the benefit and success of his calling was in question, he was absolutely unscrupulous in the methods he employed to gain a desired excellence. In this picture Gerard Selwyn knew that he had reached a height of perfection to which his work had never before attained.

One cold October morning, when Alice had left the studio, the daily sitting being over, Selwyn called Barbara to the easel. "The picture is finished now, Miss Barbara," he said gently.

During the whole of its progress, the sitter, owing to a wish expressed by the artist, had never witnessed the march of his work.

Quietly she advanced, Then, in silent amazement, beheld what appeared to her, a glorified image of herself. Could this heather crowned maiden, with the sweet, tender smile and radiant love-lit eyes be herself? For a brief space of time painter and model stood silently side by side before the easel.

"Do I look like that?" Barbara asked at last.

"Yes," he replied fervently, and for a long moment their eyes met. "In my sight, and in the eyes of all who love you."

Completely carried out of himself, Selwyn added some wild words which he would afterwards have given much to recall. But at that critical crisis, little Sophy Ferrard came flying into the room with a message, and Barbara hastened away. The knowledge that Gerard Selwyn loved her, was in its intensity almost pain.

Mrs. Ferrard was giving a dinner-party that night. Barbara spent the afternoon in her own room. After Gerard Selwyn's revelation of the morning, she was perhaps not unnaturally anxious to avoid a meeting with him, and saw with almost a feeling of satisfaction that he was wandering through the grounds with Alice.

Usually Barbara grieved her relations by arraying herself in a very indifferent manner when any festivity was impending; but she had determined to make an exception in favour of to-night. Suddenly recollecting that she had forgotten to provide herself with some flowers, the girl ran lightly down the stairs to repair the omission. She was leaving the conservatory when Alice's voice fell upon her ears. The spirit of mischief entered into Barbara, and she hastily took refuge behind a big palm, intending to spring mirthfully upon her cousin. But this design was never carried out. Alice was speaking in her customary clear tones; her listener was Mr. Selwyn.

Barbara grew white when the import of that conversation broke upon her.

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"I think it is the best of anything you have painted," Alice said. "Mamma's is not to be compared with it. Don't mistake my meaning, though—youth and beauty depicted in such a manner, present a startling contrast to middle age, however well preserved. The expression of Barbara's face is really wonderful. I have never seen her look like that. How did you manage to get it? It seems to me that you have achieved an ideal representation of her."

"At first," he said slowly, "I found her an extremely difficult subject. Afterwards," in a tone of satisfaction, "I discovered that it was only necessary to play upon Miss Dusent's emotion to get the expression I desired. It is pleasant to conquer the almost impossible. Moreover, I am convinced that the picture will receive favourable notice in the highest quarters. And now, darling, with regard to our wedding. I want you to consent to my fixing an early date. Darleigh is sadly in need of a mistress, and——"

Barbara forcibly pressed her hands to her lips to repress a cry. The next moment their voices grew fainter; and unseen and unheard, Barbara glided from the conservatory.

Then, like a hunted animal, she fled in search of the picture. A small light was burning in the studio. The canvas framed in some rich drapery reposed upon an easel. Palette and brushes were lying on a table near. Barbara caught up these tools of the painter's craft, a mad frenzy urging her to obliterate that radiant semblance of herself which Gerard Selwyn had reproduced by the aid of a lie.

For a few moments conflicting emotions struggled for expression in the anguished young face. At last the bloodless conflict was over, and Barbara left the studio, the smiling, beautiful eyes in the pictured countenance seeming to follow her with a saddened gaze.

Reaching her own room, Barbara found her maid impatient to dress her. For the first time in her life, the girl placed herself passively in those skilful hands. She smiled bitterly when the woman drew her in front of the mirror at the conclusion of her labours.

Suppressed indignation and outraged feelings had lent a light to her eyes, a glow to her countenance, which absolutely transformed the shy, retiring maiden of a few hours before. For a brief space her fortitude almost deserted her. By sheer force of will she felt capable of getting through that evening. But what of the days that were to follow? It is often when we feel ourselves well-nigh beaten that unexpected succour is at hand.

A knock came to the door, a telegram was handed in. Barbara tore it hastily open, it proved to be from her guardian, and ran as follows: "Reached London to-day. Coming down to Wayflete to fetch you to-morrow. Come 12.50; return 3.30."

It was an unlooked for but most welcome release.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE AWAKENING.

When Barbara entered the drawing-room a few minutes later, her countenance bore no indication of the torture slowly smouldering within. She was taken in to dinner by a friend of Philip's. At first she did not notice that Alice and Mr. Selwyn were seated opposite. The painter started when he caught sight of Barbara. She met his glance with perfect indifference, a conventional smile playing for an instant round her lips. Then she turned a face of bright interest upon Jack Wilton, who was recounting some amusing experiences which had lately been his.

More than once, as he sat there, Gerard Selwyn forgot the presence of his betrothed. There were moments when he could scarcely withdraw his eyes from Barbara Dusent's sparkling *riante* countenance. What wonderful transformation scene had she passed through?

All at once he realized that his picture, fine as he knew it to be, presented but a faded resemblance of her regal young beauty.

Later on, when the men returned to the drawing-room, Philip appropriated the vacant chair beside his cousin, frustrating Selwyn's half-formed intention of taking possession of it.

Presently Alice seated herself at the piano, and proceeded to trill one of the sentimental songs of the day.

"I want you to sing something, now, Barbara," her aunt observed at its conclusion.

Contrary to Mrs. Ferrard's expectation, Barbara did not make the slightest hesitation: she rose slowly to her feet. Mrs. Ferrard

glanced at her in suddenly kindled admiration, as did several of her guests, as the girl moved in her stately fashion down the long room.

"Is there any song you particularly wish for, Aunt Ella?" Barbara asked.

"Yes. 'Robin Adair,' it is an especial favourite of mine." And Mrs. Ferrard plunged into a conversation with a lady near her, on the supremacy of old ballads.

Gerard Selwyn had never heard Barbara sing, consequently he anticipated the performance with no slight amount of curiosity.

The girl's lips set in an inexplicable fashion as she proceeded to play the opening bars of the old song. A sudden silence fell upon the room when the first rich, liquid notes floated out. There was something weirdly arresting in those wistful strains.

'What when the play was o'er,' she sang with exquisite intonation and indescribable pathos. "Yes," she thought bitterly, "the play was o'er."

Gerard Selwyn noticed that there was not a sign of emotion on the singer's face at the conclusion of the song. Rather, it was coldly, proudly set, the mouth showing absolute firmness.

Barbara Dusent scored a success that night.

At last, when the guests were gathered in the studio, discussing Gerard Selwyn's pictures, the artist managed to get speech with Barbara.

"Miss Dusent," he said slowly, "do you know that to-night, for the first time, I am dissatisfied with the picture I painted of you?"

"Indeed?" she returned calmly, turning her flushed, lovely face towards him. "It appears to give immense satisfaction to those who are viewing it. But, Mr. Selwyn," with a clear little laugh, "please do not go into any artistic reasons respecting your discontent, that sort of thing is just a little incomprehensible to an outsider like myself, you know."

"I am afraid I have bored you frequently of late," he remarked, puzzled by her tone. "Still, you have borne most patiently with me."

"I am glad my manner has been so successful," she observed, a light in her eyes which he did not understand.

Selwyn gazed mutely at her, fascinated with her overwhelming beauty, which seemed to have been touched with the seal of perfection in one night. But Barbara appeared unconscious of his glance. A mocking smile played round her lips as she watched the eager little throng gathered round "A Child of the Moors!"

Selwyn was keenly conscious that every other woman in the room looked insignificant beside this slight queenly girl in her softly falling silk draperies. He glanced from her to his betrothed. Had he made a mistake after all? he asked himself, a strange throbbing at his heart. Was his mock wooing a sentient thing in spite of himself?

At last she turned to him.

"What does it represent?" she asked enigmatically. "So many feet of canvas, so many cunningly mixed pigments—while in conjunction with the promptness of your eye, your heart, and your brain, you have been driven to resort to the methods of an actor. Truly a strange and wonderful combination. Until I knew you, Mr. Selwyn, I never imagined that art claimed so much from her exponents."

"I hope you will have an opportunity of witnessing the success of the labours which you have so admirably summed up," he said in stiff annoyance.

"I am afraid that pleasure will be denied me, so it is well I have profited by my lessons," she returned, a faint note of amusement in her voice. "I am leaving Wayflete to-morrow."

"But you are coming back again," quickly.

"Oh no!" with a decisive little gesture. "Aunt Ella wishes me to do so, I know. But you see Harborough is my home. By the way, as you are spending the morning at Bexwood, I think I had better say good-bye to you now; probably it will be my last opportunity. I really ought not to stay here any longer, as I have still to give orders about my packing."

She put out her hand and allowed her fingers to rest for an instant lightly in his; her eyes shone with a baffling unfathomable light, his with an expression of startled awakening. The next moment she had passed from his sight. Gerard Selwyn realised too late the value of that which he had lightly won and lightly flung away.

A year later, before the artistic world had ceased to ring with the praises of Gerard Selwyn's famous masterpiece, its inspirer was listening to the tale of another wooing on the breezy heights of Harborough. And hearing it, Barbara Dusent let the lingering remembrance of Gerard Selwyn's treachery fall away from her for ever.

## One of Life's Tragedies.

By M. N. H.

He was a curate and she the daughter of a retired colonel. They lived in a small seaside watering place, which was gay enough in summer with all the visitors who used to bring their children there to get rest and fresh strength, before returning to home and lessons for the long winter. But when the visitors had gone, the only diversion for Slapton in general—for here and there private individuals might get up a little amusement among themselves—the only diversion for Slapton as a community was the advent of a Father Jerome or a Sequah.

The advent of the latter affected the curate little or not at all. since at that time he was daily expecting to be called to an East End parish. But the former event, if it did not affect him personally yet gave the old ladies and men of the place food for gossip, and his name figured as the all important topic of conversation for many a long day. For, the reader must know, Slapton is what is called Low Church, which means, as every one knows, that it had a wholesale abhorrence of anything in the way of form or ceremonial, and an undying hatred not unmixed with superstitious fear of Rome, or anything approaching Rome, in the cut of a coat or the wording of a prayer. Having grasped this, it may easily be imagined with what feelings the news of the Reverend Father's advent was received. At the afternoon teas, where eleven or twelve unfortunate girls were always assembled, to listen to the conversation of two or three middle aged women and sexagenarian men, it was discussed with great animation. Each had a worse tale than the other to tell of his Jesuitical methods of decoying young persons of both sexes into his convents and monasteries, of his profligacy, his cruelty, his shamelessness, and I know not what.

"And then you know dear Mrs.—" said one old lady to another, "the worst of it is that like all those Jesuits they say he is so nice looking, and has such fascinating manners. I should be afraid to go and hear him."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Nonsense," interrupted another lady brusquely, she was the

retired Colonel's wife—Mrs. Withers—and the leading spirit among this little clique—"I'm sure he's just an oily looking priest. He wouldn't fascinate me, I know, and if I don't go to hear him it is not because I am afraid, but that I entirely disapprove of him."

Some of the young ladies with difficulty restrained the expression of their feelings at this unqualified condemnation, for they possessed in their inmost hearts a sneaking regard for the Father and his doctrines, and would have been very High Church indeed had such a thing been possible in Slapton. One or two of them had even thought of going into convents in their green salad days, and were naturally angry at being damned by inference. None of them spoke however, for young ladies in Slapton were well brought up and domestic. They could sew, and had some knowledge of the culinary art, but never dreamed of interfering in the conversation of their elders; instead they generally clustered into a corner and had a conversation on their own account. But to-day it seemed to flag, and they consequently listened to what was passing around them. All were very glad when Mrs. Withers proposed an adjournment to the tennis lawn, where they could discuss their parents' narrowmindedness to their heart's content, without fear of being overheard.

The conversation continued just as briskly in their absence, without showing any signs of abatement.

"I shall go to hear him from curiosity," Mrs. Chalmers remarked, it can do no harm."

"Well I should think it wrong even to appear to countenance it," replied her vis-à-vis.

At this juncture the door was thrown open and the Curate was announced. The usual hush followed as he shook hands with each in a nervous manner.

"Perhaps you will rather go into the garden," Mrs. Withers suggested after a somewhat embarrassing pause. "There is tennis going on, and the young people will be glad for you to join them."

"Thank you," ejaculated the young man, feeling immensely relieved, "but I come to see your husband about some, about some—some churchwarden's business—in fact."

"My husband is out at present but he won't be long, and I'll send him to you directly he comes in," the Colonel's wife replied. So the Curate went to the garden, and Margaret's friends, who all had an inkling of the state of affairs, contrived that she should play with the Curate, and both were supremely happy. About a week later a bombshell was thrown into the little clique. The Curate had actually been to hear Father Jerome.

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Now that the laity should go out of curiosity, or in order to be able to speak more authoritatively against his Romish doctrines, was quite right and natural—but a clergyman of the Church of England! Such a thing was unheard of, and came as a shock to one and all. Slapton could never have appreciated the attitude of the clergyman, who, on being confronted by an indignant parishioner at the Grand Prix, remarked that he intended on the following Sunday to address his congregation on the evils of race meetings, and had come to gain information and experience.

Margaret Withers rather respected the Curate for going. It showed toleration and a willingness to hear both sides of the question she thought, so he rose one step in her estimation, and sank correspondingly in that of the older members of the parish without exception. She knew she respected him for going, and yet—well Margaret wished he hadn't just gone then—for only two or three days before she had promised to marry him, and, knowing Slapton, a dreary misgiving entered her mind that her parents, who were not only in Slapton, but of it, would never give their consent.

They had agreed not to mention their engagement until the Curate could find out whether he had any prospect of getting a curacy in the East End, to which he was looking with covetous eyes. For he was burning with the restless ardour and impatience of youth, this unattractive nervous young man, and Slapton bored him. He hated its afternoon teas, its narrowness, its intense respectability and general mediocrity, so that when an East End vicar wrote to the Slapton vicar, asking him if he could tell him of a hardworking young man who wanted an East End curacy, and the Slapton vicar suggested to the Curate that he was the very person for it, he did not attempt to conceal his satisfaction.

He hoped that everything would be settled in a few days, but meantime it was very hard for her to remain quiet and hear him abused without being able to say anything. On this particular day her blood rose to boiling point, and she had to leave the room, as she could not trust herself to stay quietly in it. Out of the house, through the garden and down the straight road, bordered by its

detached villa residences, she wandered, feeling inclined to shake her fist at each one as she passed and say "I hate you, I hate you, I hate you. You are all self-righteous and narrow minded and slow, and he is worth all of you put together." Her frame of mind was anything but ladylike and Slapton would scarcely have approved, but gradually as she walked the air seemed to calm her, and after a few minutes she saw nothing but the comic side of the situation.

It was just then, when with a bright smile on her face she was turning a corner, that she ran against the Curate. "You have good news." she asked.

"Yes, I was just wondering when I should see you to tell you," he answered. "Everything seems satisfactory, and I am to go up to town to see the Vicar the day after to-morrow, and then," interrogatively, "we must begin work as soon as possible. Don't you think so?"

"Whenever you like," she said.

And so they settled and talked over their plans, as though there were but two in the world, and she assented to his confident propositions with apparently equal confidence and hope, for she shrank from telling him what Slapton was saying of him, and of the difficulties she feared in consequence. It would be the first rebuff to his enthusiasm, and hers she determined should not be the hand to administer it. He must know all about it in a few days at the latest, but let him learn it from others.

Common sense might urge that it would lose half its power if he heard it from her lips, but she too had been enthusiastic and hated common sense. For Slapton and common sense between them, had conspired to deaden her aspirations, and their indirect instruments had been they of her own household.

So she said nothing, and when they parted, they had agreed not to mention their engagement until the Curate came back. But alas, for the best laid plans of women and men! She was unable to keep her engagement a secret until the Curate's return, or even to break the news discreetly. For two days after the last gathering there was yet another tea-party, and again the whole topic of conversation was the Curate. Someone had discovered that in addition to all his other enormities, the Curate had had a Roman Catholic priest to lunch with him. Father Ignatius was bad—but this!

"He is a wolf in sheep's clothing, my dear," said one old lady, "a

Jesuit in disguise to spy out the land, I'm sure. I was always doubtful of your clean shaven men."

"I think the Vicar ought to be spoken to and told to get rid of him," remarked Miss Guppy. "He is something worse than a Jesuit I can tell you, from facts which have come to my knowledge."

"You don't say so," ejaculated Mrs. Withers.

"Yes, really. I hear he has been engaged dozens of times. Miss Jones, you know, only left here because of Dora. He was engaged to her for weeks, and then jilted her, the poor girl couldn't stay; and then hardly was that engagement broken off when he wrote and proposed to that Miss Jackson, whom he had only met twice, simply because he heard she had money."

"Oh! that is going a little too far," said one old gentleman.

"No, I assure you it is only too true," replied the lady.

"I can quite believe it after his escapade with Miss Smith," Mrs. Chalmers remarked.

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"Oh, don't you remember that time they both went up to London by the same train. He said he was going to see a dying uncle, and she went up for shopping. Curiously enough they both missed the last train, and came back together the next day, and I heard that they had been seen together at Madame Tussaud's and at the theatre. It was queer."

Margaret could stand this no longer; even her lady-like bringing up stood her in no stead.

"Oh, how can people manufacture such lies!" she exclaimed hotly. "It is not true, not one word of it."

The ladies and old gentlemen looked at each other.

"My dear Margaret," her mother exclaimed.

"Yes," she said "it is all false from beginning to end. Mr. Meadowes is engaged to me, and he has never been engaged to anyone else, and the Roman Catholic priest is his cousin, and Slapton is a nasty, spiteful, mischief-making place," and she left the room abruptly. And so an even larger bombshell was thrown into the camp.

They were married about a month after, a perfectly quiet wedding, underhand, and scarcely legal, Slapton said. The old Vicar married them, but none of her people were present. They absolutely refused their consent, and, in the Curate's presence, gave her the choice between him or them. She hesitated for a moment, and then what

she saw in the Curate's face made her cross the room and take her place by his side.

"So be it," said her father.

"So be it," echoed the Curate, and they went out together.

For two years they strove and worked with no news or kind message from her home, and at the end of that time the Curate died, a victim to typhoid fever, against which a constitution enfeebled by constant overwork, had been unable to fight.

Then her mother came to her, and tried to take her home to her own people, but she refused.

"No mother," she said, "I cannot go back among people who think and speak of him as they do in Slapton. I must finish the work he began."

Her mother begged, prayed, implored, but to no purpose, and she went home alone. She longed to comfort her child, but as she afterwards told her husband, Margaret did not seem to feel anything except the need of work, more work. Before a year was over she had followed the Curate. Slapton seemed to see in it divine judgment, the penalty of youthful folly, and the sign of celestial displeasure. The case is quoted at tea-parties, as a warning to any youthful impetuosity that may chance to rise above the clatter of the tea-cups.

"Had they been sensible and taken the advice of their elders and waited, they might both be alive now," was frequently remarked.

But they were young, and didn't want to wait, and Slapton bored them.

## Notices of New Books.

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ONE of the results of Dr. Nansen's Arctic Explorations in the Fram is the publication by Messrs. Constable of two deeply interesting volumes. Perhaps it is with a feeling of just pride that Nansen has given his book the title of "FARTHEST NORTH," for the latitude his expedition reached on the 8th April, 1895, was 86° 14", which beats the record of northern voyaging by about 200 miles, and in all probability will continue to do so for at least some time to come. Unfortunately, histories of such voyages too often teem with tragic results, and it is almost with a feeling of dread that we venture to read them, fearing to meet with the inevitable series of appalling disasters and the terrible climax of death. Such an eventuality gives us pause while we count the cost of sacrifice. We feel then that those Arctic experiences and the knowledge they bring with them have been far too dearly bought; but Dr. Nansen's exploits are, on the whole, of a pleasant kind. Chapter succeeds chapter with bright narratives of exciting adventure and of perils met and overcome. Dangers and vicissitudes, hardships and suffering, there are in plenty: these, however, are the natural outcome of such undertakings, they help to give zest to, and help to make up the charm of any book of adventurous travel. No deaths, it is pleasurable to say, are recorded here, and indeed we hardly read of any case of serious sickness or untoward accident. Bravery and pluck, energy and perseverance have combined to bring to a successful issue this hazardous venture. and we are right glad to welcome in our midst the gallant leader of the brave little crew who shared his fortunes on board the Fram.

To be enjoyed, "FARTHEST NORTH" must be read from beginning to end. We hope that in a not far distant time Messrs. Constable will be able to put it within the reach of the million to be the fortunate possessors of so delightful a record, and one which aptly illustrates the good old proverb, "Success comes not by wishing, but hard work bravely done."

Mr. Oliphant Smeaton's sketch of the "LIFE OF TOBIAS SMOLLETT," forms the latest addition to the "Famous Scots" series (Messrs. Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier). This is the second volume Mr. Smeaton contributes. He has dealt with the subject in the just and appreciative manner which it deserves. We are particularly in-

terested in the concluding chapters, containing, as they do, in concise form, a critical judgment, which is extremely interesting. Mr. Smeaton is of opinion that the ground for a comparison between Smollett, Fielding and Richardson do not exist, as they worked on totally different lines. That anyone will refuse to give Smollett a front rank as a novelist he does not think conceivable; but his place as a writer in the poetic and dramatic branches of British literature cannot be expected to stand so high.

OUT OF THE DARKNESS, by Percy Fendall and Fox Russell. This story, published by Smith Elder and Co., 1897, possesses a certain amount of power and interest, but is unfortunately spoilt by the disconnected style; a fault which is often found in a book written by more than one author, is here at times very obvious. The characters, especially those of the hero and heroine, are well sketched, and the interest increases as the story approaches the end, but Mr. Fendall and Mr. Russell have attempted too difficult a task in essaying a joint novel.

C. H. R.

## The Drama.

Two Little Vagabonds at the Princess's Theatre, by George Sims and Arthur Shirley, is an excellent melodrama. The plot has the merit of originality, as the opening scene of the father, deliberately consigning his little son to a chance mendicant (as an act of revenge for his wife's supposed infidelity) leads one to expect. The strenuous efforts of the reconciled parents to discover the whereabouts of the abandoned child, and the subsequent stratagem resorted to by those to whom the irate parent committed him, all lend themselves to a clever drama. The Two Little Vagabonds maintain their rôles with marked ability, and the piece may be heartily commended.

Admirers of Nelson are now offered a choice of plays, both having the great Commander for central figure; but in Nelson's Enchantress at the Avenue, we fail to find the man whose memory is so endeared to English men and women. Of course those who appreciate good acting, apart from the intrinsic merit of the piece, will be well satisfied with a play where Mrs. Patrick Campbell and Mr. Forbes Robertson act conjointly; though in spite of this attraction at the Avenue, the hero as personified at the Olympic in Mr. Robert Buchanan's play will, no doubt, attract a great many more to whom the sentimental Nelson at the Avenue is too unreal a figure. M. W.